

THE SPIRIT OF IRONY AND THE

PROBLEM OF NEGATIVITY

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis, in its entirety  
and without exception, has been composed by myself.

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ABSTRACT

This essay argues that irony is a necessary and central part of the spirit that animates principled speech.

The notion that irony is negative, especially as expressed by Kierkegaard, is examined from within by re-presenting the negative ironist in dialogue. This presentation has as its purpose the discovery and elucidation of the crisis of negative irony. The crisis is then developed as initiating reflection on the problems of temperance and justice.

The problem of temperance is raised through the negative ironist's experience of anger. Anger raises the problem of speech's relationship to nature. Temperance as self-mastery in our relation to nature is developed through the notion of the mastery of anger. Through an examination of Plato's Charmides the argument is advanced that the development of justice depends upon temperance, since, ironically, justice tends to originate in a type of intemperance. Temperance educates justice by nurturing its Desire for value. It enables justice to mature through the work of re-enlivening and re-valuing inheritance. Temperate justice is the positive development of resource towards the realization of value. It is embodied in Socrates' ironic relation to nature.

The problem of justice is raised through the negative ironist's rejection of awe. Awe raises the problem of speech's relationship to the polis. Justice as the demand for satisfaction in the midst of names is developed through the notion of the consummation of Desire. Through further examination of Plato's Charmides, the argument is advanced that the development of temperance depends upon justice, since, ironically, temperance tends to originate in a type of injustice. Justice educates temperance by giving to it a grasp of what is necessary to it. The work of justice is to develop the ideal speaker's conviction, that is, his capacity to maintain the motion of development. Just temperance is embodied in Socrates' ironic relation to names.

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## I N T R O D U C T I O N

### THE IRONIST AS MORAL ACTOR

1. In Book Six of the Republic, Socrates, having laid out the qualities of the philosopher, is called on by Adeimantos to address the popular view that in actual fact philosophers are "utterly worthless" and "useless to society".<sup>1</sup> We can treat Socrates' reply in a philosophical way by developing a sense of its worth and usefulness. Socrates' reply turns out to be worthwhile and useful as a way of initiating reflection on the nature of irony.

When Adeimantos asks for Socrates' opinion of the popular view, Socrates gives the surprising and initially disturbing answer that he thinks it is true (487d). The surprising character of Socrates' answer seems to resonate with some notion of it as ironic. It is ironic for Socrates, who has been praising the philosopher as the worthiest one in the community, to suddenly turn around and agree with the polis' view of him as worthless and useless. So far, then, irony has the character of a surprising event: irony is the occurrence of some noteworthy incongruence either in a situation or in a speech. Irony as surprise, then, treats as central what will turn out to be its most preliminary feature: for the surprise emerges through the fact that not only situations, but speeches too, are events. They are material phenomena that may exhibit irony, that is some incongruity between their parts that is noteworthy and surprising. Yet even when we go beyond this notion, the surprise does not become simply

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1. Plato, The Republic, translated by F.M.Cornford (1941), 487c-d. Subsequent quotations from this and other Platonic dialogues are cited within my text through the use in regular fashion of the Estienne (Stephanus) pagination.

irrelevant. At present, we, along with Adeimantos, are merely surprised. Our problem is, not how to do away with the surprise, but rather, how to transform it. What is the good of the surprise: how is it worthwhile and useful?

We begin to transform the surprise by calling to mind Socrates' being oriented to it. If Socrates had been artless in his practices, then the surprise might remain imprisoned at the level of an event. The surprise would remain simply a dumb feature of an oversight. But Socrates, of course, knows that his response is surprising. Socrates is himself oriented to giving Adeimantos a surprise. Socrates is telling us, in effect, that the true way of transforming the surprise of his answer is to treat it as oriented rather than accidental. This might involve some trouble for us: certainly it does for Adeimantos. Our work in this dissertation is to face up to this trouble and to transform it into a moment within theorizing. Our work, that is, is exactly the work of Adeimantos in facing up to the initial surprise generated by Socrates' reply. To say this differently: our work is to generate a stronger sense of irony.

Adeimantos' trouble at this point - the disturbance he experiences - is that he is unqualified to enjoy the playfulness of Socrates' reply. He experiences the remark as tantalizing rather than playful. Adeimantos reacts by demanding of Socrates,

"Then (if the popular opinion is true) how can it be right to say that there will be no rest from trouble until states are ruled by these philosophers whom we are now admitting to be of no use to them?" (487e).

When Socrates replies that this needs to be answered by a parable, the unfortunate Adeimantos is driven to exclaim: "Whereas you, of course, never talk in parables!" (487e). Adeimantos becomes

sarcastic (rather than ironic) because he resents the easy play with which Socrates tantalizes his understanding. Notice how closely this corresponds to the "popular view" of Socrates (the philosopher) as one who distracts the understanding and renders it distraught in confusion: i.e. as a destructive influence on the polis. And if Adeimantos sounds like the polis, then Socrates sounds like he is teasing the polis, "playing" with it by tantalizing it.

Yet, on the other hand, although we sense how difficult Adeimantos finds it to resist the popular view, when Socrates actually asks him if he thinks it is true, something in him does resist. He replies: "I do not know; I should like to hear your opinion" (487d). And he is honest enough not to pretend to a knowledge he lacks: admitting that he does not know implies very strongly the strength of temptation he experiences towards the popular view. So this shows us that Adeimantos, in asking his question, is facing up to a part of himself that he is dissatisfied with. It would not be hard, in fact, for Socrates to abuse Adeimantos' vulnerability at this point. Adeimantos' sarcasm is not born of meanness but rather of the desire to protect himself. Socrates' playing might merely tantalize Adeimantos. The ironist must know the difference between being playful and tantalizing the other.

Socrates must remember that irony, deeply, is an offer to the other. Socrates really wants to offer Adeimantos the opportunity of transforming surprise into something deeper. Adeimantos, that is, does not personify the polis: rather, he is tempted by the polis. Socrates, shortly afterwards, speaks disparagingly of the polis to Adeimantos. He says of the multitude that it "can never be philo-

sophical" and "is bound to disapprove of all who pursue wisdom"(494a). Being ironic towards the polis then, given this view, might amount to tantalizing it, driving it to distraction, re-enacting the superiority of the philosopher. Perhaps irony is merely the philosopher's way of dealing (politically) with the polis?

Yet Adeimantos does not personify the polis, and Socrates, in keeping with what he says about the philosopher (494e), is "sensitive" to this. Perhaps, indeed, nobody really, or merely, personifies the polis? Socrates tells Adeimantos that "the public itself (is) the greatest of all sophists" (492a), yet even the sophist does not merely personify the city. Rather, as Strauss says of Thrasymachos, the sophist "imitates" or "plays" the city.<sup>2</sup> The sophist is oriented towards the polis not only as the source of his inspiration but also as the arbiter of his right. The sophist, although he does not personify the polis, is opportunist towards the city. Thus, he plays in the weak sense of "playing at" wisdom. Adeimantos knows that the sophist is a dissembler: Socrates and Glaucon, indeed, had just succeeded in distinguishing the philosopher (the lover of wisdom) from the lover of appearances (the dissembler of wisdom). Adeimantos is in between the sophist and the philosopher by virtue of his rejection of semblance or "playing at": that is, by virtue of his honesty. Being "in between" means that Adeimantos tends to be indecisive: yet he is dissatisfied with this indecisiveness (the sway of the polis over him). He is indecisive because of his fear that the philosopher's irony is mere dissembling: i.e. that it is dishonest. (It would be dishonest if it were merely the reverse of the sophist's dissembling: that is, if the philosopher was not really a lover of wisdom but only one who tantalizes the ignorant). He is dissatisfied with his inde-

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2. L.Strauss (1964), p.78.



cision because he knows how obscure his understanding of it is, and also how the obscurity of indecision tends (by its nature) to perpetuate itself. Adeimantos is really asking Socrates: what is the good of irony, play, dissembling? Adeimantos is asking Socrates to demonstrate to him the worth and usefulness of the philosopher's orientation to irony, play, and dissembling.

Adeimantos knows that something is holding him back but he does not know what it is: so he is dissatisfied with himself. He needs to be shown the good of philosophy's irony, and this he demonstrates in his own lack of irony towards the polis. It emerges from Socrates' response that Adeimantos' problem is that he takes the polis literally. . Adeimantos' problem is that he agrees to call philosophers those whom the polis calls philosophers. Yet he also wants to agree with Socrates that the philosopher is the best in the community. It is his implicit agreement with the polis - an agreement he is unconscious of - that is holding him back. Adeimantos will turn the surprise of Socrates' reply into a positive development when he realizes that what made the surprise possible was his tacit agreement with (his lack of irony towards) the polis.

Because Adeimantos takes the polis literally, he is prey to the polis. He is hunted down and cornered by whatever the polis says.<sup>3</sup> Hence Adeimantos is worried about the polis. It is difficult for him to deal in a satisfactory way with what the polis says. Given that those whom the polis calls philosophers ( and who call themselves philosophers) are philosophers, then how can we escape the popular view? It seems undeniable that philosophers are "worthless and useless".

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3. Adeimantos uses this metaphor himself (487b-c): the polis, he says, feels itself to be cornered by Socrates' arguments. Now we can see that ironically, it is he who is cornered - though not by Socrates. Yet, for us, the problem of the theorist who feels cornered by the polis is both lively and troublesome. This essay is our attempt to demonstrate this liveliness and trouble.

The polis says things that are undeniable yet dissatisfactory. The polis makes one dissatisfied.

Adeimantos is dissatisfied: with the polis, which refutes his desire to agree with Socrates, with Socrates, who seems to tantalize him, and above all, with himself, for allowing the polis to refute him. Adeimantos allows the polis to refute him, and hence to persuade and influence him, by taking the words of the polis literally. When Socrates says that the public itself is the greatest of all sophists, Adeimantos agrees with a certain poignancy that its influences on youthful promise "must be irresistible" (492d). So Adeimantos wants Socrates to help him to resist the polis. Adeimantos wants to hear an account of justice (the rule of the philosopher) that will be strong enough to resist the polis. Adeimantos wants to hear a development of justice that is strong and positive.

Yet this brings us back to the surprise of Socrates' reply. We can ask: why is the reply so surprising? As we have already seen, it is surprising because of our implicit agreement with the polis. But it is also surprising for another reason: because it contradicts what we expect and hope of Socrates. We (Adeimantos) expect and hope that Socrates will refute the polis, because we secretly (in ways we do not grasp) agree with the polis. Instead, Socrates ironically agrees with the polis because he does not really agree with the polis (i.e. take it literally). Socrates' strength is his knowledge that those whom the polis calls "worthless" and "useless" are either falsely undervalued or else not genuine philosophers. Although the polis may call the philosopher worthless, Socrates achieves a sense of irony towards the polis because he knows (has the deep conviction) that both

names cannot be true of the same person at the same time. Those who appear to be philosophers may well be worthless, and those who are philosophers may well appear to be worthless. Socrates' ironic agreement (with both of these propositions) would be tantalizing if the irony simply cancelled out any positive content, i.e. if the substance of the agreement were merely ironized for the sake of nothingness. Yet Socrates ironically agrees with the "popular view" because what is unshakable for him is the justice of the genuine philosopher.

Adeimantos wants to refute the polis because he is unironic towards the polis. He wants to defeat the polis because he suffers the very real fear that it could defeat him. And, of course, as should already be obvious, the polis is defeating Adeimantos right now. Yet Socrates is showing that there is no real need to refute the polis. What is necessary in relation to the polis, is to be ironic. Somehow, to want to refute the polis (to be dissatisfied with it and with oneself) is already to have been "refuted" or defeated by it. The one who suffers this feels a dissatisfaction towards the polis that risks becoming something worse. Adeimantos nurtures the impulse to avenge himself for the injustice of the polis (towards the philosophic desire in him). His problem is his beginning in the weakness of literalness (which makes him defensive) rather than in the strength of positive irony (which would enable him to be just).

Defensive literalness breeds, out of its initial dissatisfaction, hatred and resentment towards the polis. In response to this, we can begin by saying that the theorist is one who is just. Justice (rather than hatred) towards the polis, we shall seek to demonstrate, requires positive irony.

2. So far, we have listened, step by step, to the philosopher's development of irony. At this point, however, we can imagine the return of Adeimantos to the conversation. And in a very real sense, his original rejoinder still stands. He feels trapped in a corner, perhaps, by our argument, but we have not genuinely convinced him, because we have merely ignored the polis' claim that the ironist (the philosopher who dissembles and thus tantalizes) is "worthless and useless". Is it not possible, Adeimantos would ask, that the polis is justified in its view of irony? Must we not at least take seriously this possibility, instead of merely ignoring it?

If we reflect on Adeimantos' question, it emerges not only that the question is justified, but also that, in a certain sense, the polis is justified too. Irony risks becoming unjust towards the polis and hence justifying the polis' charges against it.

To discover how this is so, we must consider the temptation that the polis poses for the ironist, and in this way, find out about the corruptibility of irony and the particular form it takes. The ironist knows that the polis is the greatest sophist. The polis dissembles the truth, whereas the ironist dissembles in order to enliven reflection and encourage the pursuit of the truth. The ironist must live strongly with the polis (which is everywhere, including within himself): he must enliven reflection and philosophy whatever the polis does to discourage him. Yet the greatest temptation of all for the ironist is to fall into a sense of rancour towards the polis. Irony lives and flourishes when it remembers that the polis as Socrates tells Crito can do "neither the greatest evil nor the greatest good" (Plato, The Crito, 44d). Irony suffers and becomes negative when it is driven to seek personifications of the polis. This is precisely the activity

that will foster the growth of its rancour. Whenever the ironist succumbs to this temptation the corruption of his practices not only "justifies" the charges of the polis, but actually gives rise to those charges in the first place. The corruption of irony is simultaneously the child of the polis and the justification of the polis. The child of the polis fathers the self-justification of the polis - if only because it is worse than its father. We are reminded here of the regression towards tyranny in Book Eight of the Republic. The corruption of irony is the corruption of justice, because it is a kind of injustice towards others. Corrupt irony treats others as personifications of the polis.

We see an example of irony's corruption in the work of Jane Austen<sup>4</sup>. In his essay on Pride and Prejudice, Conrad suggests that the premise for Austen's irony is the notion of society as a contractual hypocrisy, and the social contract as an armed truce<sup>5</sup>. What is most striking in this notion is the relationship between the contract and the truce. A truce is a kind of contract: a contract designed, not to further an active pursuit in common, but rather, to draw a limit to the actions that would result from hostility. A truce presupposes conflict between its participants. Yet Austen's irony goes further than this: it says that the social contract itself (indeed any contract) presupposes at least the mild type of conflict referenced by "hypocrisy". A contract is premised on the lack of a genuine bonding between its participants. We might say that Austen sees what Rousseau does not: that the "general will" that requires a contract between its members can only be something estranged and antagonistic to them as individuals. The ironist stands out from the many as the

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4. See especially Pride and Prejudice (1978). P.Conrad's Introduction to this edition has been the starting point for our discussion here.
5. P.Conrad, Introduction to Austen (1978), p.vii.

"true individual", that is, as the one whose sensitivity forces upon him the realization that the general will is crude and vulgar, and that nothing but hypocrisy (the social contract) holds it together. Rousseau and Austen both formulate a people without spirit, without a genuine grasp of what they can therefore only pretend to share: yet it is Austen not Rousseau who grasps the far from utopian consequences of this contractually based society.

To begin with, here, we see that Austen agrees with Socrates in saying that the polis is the greatest of sophists. Yet Austen grasps this in a very different way: from the interest in the individual rather than in the theorist. So, whereas for Socrates the polis is innocent of its own ignorance, for Austen the opposite is the case. Now innocence is the opposite of both knowledge and guilt. The polis is both knowledgeable and guilty because the sophism on which it is founded is the "contractual hypocrisy" of the truce. This turns the polis into an actor subject to moral evaluation. More pointedly, it has the tendency to turn actors into personifications of the polis. To the extent that anyone is "like" the polis, they automatically, by dint of the contractual hypocrisy on which it is founded, become participants in its knowledge and in its guilt. Indeed, although the actor in a sense arrives after the contract has already been established (by "everybody else", as it were), it is he, through his collusion in polite and empty talk, who helps to maintain that contract. Hence, the actor - in this contractual scheme - to the extent that he is "like" the polis (i.e. unironic towards it), personifies the polis.

Now we must ask: what is the basis, at the notional level, for this hatred of the polis and its supposed contract? We should first



note that hatred of the polis generates an irony designed to protect one from the contract by mocking it. This shows us that the self-protective ironist regards the contract as lamentable but irremediable. But why is the contract deemed necessary by the polis? Conrad's Introduction can help us here. He says that the second premise of Austen's irony is the family. We are bound to our family by duty: the family is tyrannical, in Austen, because it is both accidental and inescapable. Thus, Conrad writes that

"the individual is dually the prisoner of the false civilities of society and the embarrassing accidents of nature, which afflicts Elizabeth with unworthy parents". 6

In Austen, the family stands as a mere icon of nature.

Yet duty does not belong to the realm of nature: it is social, and above all, contractual. If the family is merely natural, duty towards it is not. It is duty, or contract, that "elevates" the family above the realm of nature. Contract, says the polis, rescues men from the "state of nature": contract, enacted through duty, rescues us from original conflict and makes human life possible. Protective irony agrees with the polis insofar as it sees the origin of the social contract in the state of nature. It parts company with the polis in that, for it, the contract is a completely ridiculous attempt to overcome the unthinking vulgarity and conflict of the state of nature.

What is truly hateful to the protective ironist is not the polis, nor the contract, but the basically irremediable state of nature that gives rise to them. Only the ironist genuinely escapes the clutches of nature: only he has become more than merely accidental, merely natural. The only true orientation, for the protective

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6. P. Conrad, Introduction to Austen (1978), p.vii.

ironist, is the struggle to evade nature, both without and within. This struggle can only be waged from outside the polis - because those inside the polis (the contract) have forgotten the horrors of nature. Better: orienting to nature via a contract shows a lack of proper awareness of the horrors of nature, (family, hubris, village idiot, or whatever) in the first place. Those who assent to the social contract do so because they fail to see its hypocrisy: that is, they underestimate nature. They imagine that something as hollow as a contract can overcome the claims of nature. They are dimly aware that nature can sometimes run wild, but not aware enough - for the simple reason that they are still dominated by it. The polis says we must control (the excesses of) nature. The ironist - the sensitive one - hates the hubris of (human) nature and hates the polis for simply establishing a truce with it when what is necessary is to overcome or transcend it.

Hearing all of this, we can begin to grasp the case for the polis. The first point, which the polis itself might make, is that it is surely more moderate to modify nature - which is, after all, the point of making a treaty with it - than in effect to wage war against it, as self-protective irony does. Secondly, and much more importantly, the negative ironist's very notions of contract, hypocrisy, armed truce, and so on, derive from and are animated by a hatred of nature. So the protective ironist's whole project is premised on a notion of the polis that is unjust to begin with. The polis can see that protective, or what we will call negative irony, is based on hatred.<sup>7</sup>

The polis rejects protective irony as worthless and useless because it is based on hatred of the state of nature, which is simul-

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7. In passing we may say that at least the protective ironist hates the social contract he invents, and is hence more "natural" than he realizes. Only a very bland passion could find the idea of a social contract appealing. We will need to explore this "naturalness" of self-protective irony more fully, but for now, we can notice simply that it is not as removed from nature as it thinks.



taneously hatred of ignorance. For self-protective irony, the ignorant person is the person who lives in the state of nature: that is, merely accidentally, subject to the whims of vanity and hubris. Ignorance, in this view, is nature's invasion of self-consciousness. Hence ignorance is indiscriminate. The differences it makes between things are centred around the gratification of its natural pleasures rather than genuine value. Ignorance calls good those speakers or things that gratify its natural whims and desires. And, above all, ignorance is epitomized in the polis' treaty with nature. The polis shows its ignorance in its underestimation of nature. Underestimating nature pre-supposes being under its sway: that is, it pre-supposes ignorance. For self-protective irony, the social contract is merely the ratification of ignorance. For it, not to be ironic is to be ignorant.

Irony now seeks to transcend nature and the polis in order to prevent the possible invasion of its soul by them. This establishes why we have been calling it self-protective irony. To protect oneself from nature and the polis by seeking to transcend them is an activity grounded in antagonism. Thus self-protective irony posits, if nothing else, an original war, even more original than the war of all against all: the war of nature against man and man against nature. The ironist will presume to win this war at a purely abstract level: nature is transcended. The status of nature and the polis as insistent claims on self-conscious thought is cancelled and abolished.

The negative ironist is one whose whole life is animated by, and given over to, his desire to transcend nature and the polis. He wants to transcend what is accidental and tyrannic for the sake of essence. That is, he wants to transcend substance through irony. Negative irony treats as the most important thing the difference

between nature and essence. To grasp the essential or the necessary is to overcome (i.e. transcend) our bondage to the accidental. The negative ironist's interest in difference is his paramount interest. For Kierkegaard, as we shall see, it was Socrates, with his method of questioning and dissolving opinions and coming to the aporia or negative conclusion, who epitomized this interest.

Negative irony is thus seen as the source of all transcendental philosophy and religion: it is in negative irony that the impulse to create another world, over and above this one, is seen to originate. Yet whereas philosophy and religion let mundane reality be (or merely put it in brackets), the negative ironist devotes his energy to tantalizing and mocking it. The charge against negative irony is that whereas philosophy and religion "console" us, it taunts our worldly position from a "superior" vantage point.

Because the ironist's first and last interest is in the difference between the essential and the accidental, he effectively disposes of everything substantial in favour of the most abstract notion: Being, the One, or the Idea. For Kierkegaard, the Socratic Idea references nothing more or less than Socrates' indifference to what is substantial (nature and the polis). Socrates is portrayed by Kierkegaard as the genuine forerunner of those "romantic ironists" of his own century, Schlegel and Tieck. Of them he writes that whereas "Fichte would construct the world..... Schlegel and Tieck, on the other hand would dispose of a world".<sup>8</sup> The romantic or negative ironist wants to "poetically produce himself"<sup>9</sup>: in order to do this he reduces the substance of nature and polis to emptiness. His irony

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8. S.Kierkegaard (1968), p.292.

9. Loc. cit. p.297.

serves to cancel it out and utterly detach himself from it. And yet - precisely because of this - his interest (in the essential, the Idea, and so on) is really an interest in nothing. What the negative ironist calls the Idea, the One, and so on, is really Nothingness. This is the negativity of the ironist, for Kierkegaard: that he reduces to nothing everything substantial for the sake of a perverse, cerebral, passion for Nothingness or Difference.

3. Now we ask: what is our problem in relation to this? With what must our dissertation contend if we are to demonstrate convincingly the worth and usefulness of irony? Our task is this: we must transform negative irony so as to realize irony's full development. It is immediately clear that this is not the same as transcending negative irony. To "transcend" negative irony would, in fact, be to merely repeat what negative irony already practices. Our dissertation must be a transformation of negative irony that re-presents the real depth and spirit of irony. We need to consider what this will actually involve in the positive sense.

We propose to examine the dialectical movement through which negative irony is transformed. And since we want to re-present transformation rather than transcendence we will attempt to show it as a motion from within negative irony itself. The irony of negative irony is that it has the potential to become positive, i.e. to realize the true spirit and depth of irony. It is necessary to ask - how will this be? Here we return to a point we made in passing earlier: that negative irony is not as removed from nature as it tends to think. Hatred, even of nature, is an attitude that sustains an attachment to nature, even, in this instance, in spite of itself. Somehow, it must be possible for negative irony to experience its attachment to nature:

that is, to re-experience nature under the auspices of a new and alternative possibility. The real problem for irony now emerges as the problem of nature, just as the failure of negative irony is its failure to resolve this problem. Our claim is that the spirit of irony is the strength of man's relation to nature. Of course, we do not know yet what this means - but what we can grasp, as our beginning, is our need for a strong relation to nature. We can grasp this as a strong need. The relation to nature we need must be stronger than the treaty (the polis' relation) - but also, crucially, stronger than transcendence and abstractness (the negative ironist's relation).

If we began with the problem of justice (in the ironist's relation to the polis) we see emerge here the problem of temperance (in the ironist's relation to nature). Justice and temperance are both at stake in our inquiry. The example of the negative ironist shows us that somehow, justice and temperance seem to be bound up together in intrinsic ways which as yet remain unclear to us. We will use the example of irony, in this essay, as a way of developing and resolving the relationship between the two virtues. To initiate this, we propose to develop the ironist's relation to nature through a phenomenological account of the development of negative into positive irony. This account requires the exercise of positive irony in order to develop negative irony beyond itself. Yet this development is one that occurs from within negative irony itself. This is so because on the one hand negative irony cannot develop without the influence of the positive. Without this influence it simply remains as it is. Yet on the other hand this influence can never merely come from outside of itself. Negative irony can only transform itself when it grasps the dissatisfaction of its life and its need to develop beyond itself. That is, negative irony must encounter its aporia, and then seek (for itself)

to make use of this encounter for the sake of development. The negative must come to see itself as a moment on the path towards the positive and the spirited. It must come to experience the absolute necessity of developing into the positive. This takes place when, in the words of Hegel, it grasps "the conscious insight into the untruth of (its) phenomenal knowledge"<sup>10</sup>, i.e. the untruth of negative irony itself.

Negative irony is "untrue" because it impedes the development of knowledge of the in-itself. Negative irony is consumed by its hatred of nature and the polis, so it impedes the grasp of what is good and desirable in itself. The negative ironist does not achieve the strong and spirited life of realization: what is good and desirable in itself is not integrated into the for-itself of spirit.

Since it is our desire, since, indeed, it is necessary, to explicate the development of negative irony from within, we must now ask: how is negative irony to first experience and then overcome (through dialectical movement) its dissatisfaction with itself? How does it even reach, let alone enact, the "conscious insight" into its own "untruth"? This is the question of (self) education that has been central to philosophy since Meno asked Socrates his question and before. When Socrates proposes to carry out an investigation into virtue, Meno objects:

"But how will you look for something when you don't in the least know what it is? How on earth are you going to set up something you don't know as the object of your search? To put it another way, even if you come right up against it, how will you know that what you have found is the thing you didn't know?" <sup>11</sup>

Meno is asking: how can any self reflect on itself and do more than merely repeat itself - i.e.

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10. G.W.F.Hegel, (1949), p.136.

11. Plato, The Meno, translated by W.K.C.Guthrie (1956) (80d).

educate, transform, or develop itself? We know from familiar experience how serious and problematic a question this is. Common sense (the polis) tells us that "people never change", and we all have innumerable little reasons, drawn from our knowledge both of others and of ourselves, not to dismiss this view very easily. As Adeimantos would say, the many little reasons soon add up to one big reason, and we find ourselves almost without knowing it, believing in the truth of the "popular view". Our need for the strength of positive irony is our need for a convincing demonstration of an answer to Meno's question, such that the "popular view" that "people never change" is not simply dismissed as untrue but rather, revealed as a kind of lazy half-truth. Because the polis speaks half-truths, it must be treated ironically, rather than literally, or merely negatively.

Our question is: how can negative irony learn? How can it develop the practice of self-education? As we have already begun to suggest, negative irony experiences its dissatisfaction with itself when it experiences - to its own surprise - the extent to which it is grounded in animosity, or hatred of the polis. This surprise returns us to the most basic conception of irony. Negative irony faces the task of transforming and strengthening its surprise at itself. Its own untruth (its hatred or animosity) will drive it into a corner where it cannot move: and initially it will want to imagine that the polis has driven it into this corner. The corner into which negative irony gets driven is this: that despite its desire to transcend nature and the polis, it becomes consumed by its own antagonism to nature and the polis. The "conscious insight" that negative irony must grasp and which will initially surprise it is that it is its own project that has driven it into its corner. Far from having an ideal



relationship to conditions, negative irony experiences its bewitchment by conditions. It is held fast as if put under a spell by conditions, so that it remains caught and cannot develop. It experiences its subjection to its own unmediated natural reactions of hatred and animosity. Negative irony thus encounters the nemesis of nature, as it were, on those who would simply transcend it. It discovers from within this experience the need to revolutionize its relationship to conditions (the natural and accidental). It discovers, to its horror and despair, but also to its everlasting benefit, its own intemperance and its own injustice.

Yet this discovery in itself is insufficient. With it, we reach the stage of perplexity rather than development. As yet, that is, we have reached the point indicated by Meno when he says he feels like the paralyzed victim of a sting-ray (Socrates) (80a-b). We are at the point of the "horror and despair" of negative irony's self-discovery. We must ask Meno's question: how are we to develop beyond this point, to self-education?

Socrates answers Meno's question by telling him that knowledge is a kind of re-collection (81a-e). What is Socrates telling Meno here about education? How can his reply really educate us? Now one of the problems of Socrates' reply is that it rests on what is, at best, only a "likely story": the immortality of the soul. We have to accept as true what is merely likely. To moderns especially - much more than to Socrates' fellow Greeks - this is a very troublesome point. So we must listen to some account (logos) of the reason for accepting as true what is merely likely. Socrates proceeds here to give just such an account. He says to Meno:

"We ought not then to be led astray by the contentious argument you quoted (viz.above). It would make us lazy, and is music in the ears of weaklings. The other doctrine (i.e. the doctrine of re-collection) produces energetic seekers after knowledge; and being convinced of its truth, I am ready, with your help, to inquire into the nature of virtue" (81d-e): my emphasis.

The importance of this argument is that Socrates is telling us that all inquiry and all investigation needs the use of a resource. It needs this, because without a resource to use, it will wither: we become "lazy and weak". Inquiry must begin with the free use of the very resources that foster inquiry itself. This is absolutely necessary because without this use inquiry would wither and die. There is no point in doubting or "questioning" this necessity: instead, the inquirer must grasp it and strengthen his bond of friendship with it. The ideal speaker or true inquirer is the one who freely accepts the absolute requirement of using the resources of inquiry.

Socrates' resource, in many of his conversations besides the one with Meno, is the doctrine of re-collection. Our resource, in this essay, will be positive irony. Our resource is also the central topic of our inquiry.

Our claim is that positive irony is that which makes self-education possible. Our inquiry will seek to demonstrate this by using the resources of positive irony to develop our grasp of what it is. Self-education is nothing else but this: the use of educational resources by those who, as they begin, do not really know what education is. Positive irony will be our resource in transforming negative irony. We can introduce this notion here by saying that already we have grasped negative irony in an ironic way. Ironically, negative irony is not as removed from nature as it imagines. Even more to the



point, it is the very nature of its own project that gives rise to its subjection to nature. Grasping this is the first stage of negative irony's self-education. In order to develop beyond this stage, we need positive irony. We need the kind of irony that is oriented to development.

Irony teaches negative irony how it has failed to be fully conscious of itself. Although it wanted to transcend nature, in reality it was subjected by nature. Irony, then, brings phenomenal knowledge (in this case, negative irony) to self-consciousness and reveals its own "untruth" to it. It is the use of resource (i.e. being positive) that transforms negative irony beyond this point. The use of the resource leads negative irony to work with itself by learning to find within its very self the matters it needs to take up and develop. That is, negative irony does not merely discover that its self is "inadequate" and hence commit a kind of theoretic suicide. Instead it goes through a birth: it dies out of itself by being born into its positive self. It inherits for itself the positive. The use of the resource teaches the negative ironist of the need to be strongly oriented to what is desirable rather than merely disenchanted with its own history, since this attitude is itself part of the requirement of education. The use of the resource is thus the process of education itself.

4. The positive ironist is, in a very significant sense, an author. Positive irony, as we have seen, authorizes / authors itself. It does not invent itself (treat itself as its own originator) but rather achieves consciousness of itself as the resource for inquiry. That is, it achieves its own authority: it develops a mature grasp of its relation to its source.

At the opposite extreme to positive irony is the sophist. The sophist dissembles the truth. Sophistry pretends to be conscious of itself as the resource for inquiry, but it never achieves the genuine authority of the inquirer. Although it may speak forcefully, it does not speak authoritatively. The (political) sophist par excellence is the tyrant. The tyrant corrupts the polis in the way the sophist corrupts speech: he severs rule from authority and turns it into mere enforcement and domination. The tyrant, in his appeal to mere necessity, the requirements of the situation, is analogous to the sophist in his appeal to what is apparent to all or merely persuasive. The tyrant and the sophist elevate as the principle of their accounts what is most forceful and coercive. To the extent that the "popular view" invites and generates the elevation of this principle, it is the greatest sophist. Sophistry sustains the segregation of rule from authority and lives off this segregation. A sophist is one who considers it unneeded or even inadvisable to achieve authorship, since he sees it as preferable to enforce the rule of the persuasive and apparent.

Within the polis, then, it is possible to recognize several styles or modes of discourse. The sophist and the tyrant appeal to expediency ("necessity"), whether of argument or of action. Since "man is the measure", whatever is found to be expedient to (particular) men becomes the measure. Thus it becomes "necessary" to subject the Melians since not to do so would be seen by others as weakness<sup>12</sup>. It becomes "necessary" to deter the Russians, since not to do so would be seen by them as weakness. Examples of this kind of talk in modern political discourse are, of course, innumerable. This style - the style of the sophist - corrupts discourse by segregating authorship

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12. See the account given by Thucydides, The Peloponnesian War (1954) Book 5, 84-116.

and rule. Discourse is reduced effectively to a mere expression of interests: discourse becomes ideological.

Against the tyrant, many oppose the polis by seeking to strip away even the last vestiges of authorial justification, the fig-leaves, as it were, with which the tyrant (in his morally bankrupt state) attempts to clothe himself. Often, these discourses set out with the creditable intentions of exposing the tyrant to public visibility, yet their weakness is that they usually do this by treating speech itself as if it were inherently or incipiently tyrannical. For example, the notion of authority gets treated as if it were merely a veil used to cloak coercive power - when it is only the case that countless corrupt rulers have abused the notion in this way. In order to protect from the possibility of corruption, an unacceptable price is paid: discourse is itself weakened and corrupted. At its extreme, this corruption (set in train, if we like, by the tyrant) leads to the nihilistic gestures of sheer style discussed with such passion by Camus: gestures wanting to be moral, in the end sunk into the amoral<sup>13</sup>.

Another opponent of the tyrant, and especially the tyranny of the polis itself, is the negative ironist. If the political critic claims to discover a preferable version of what is necessary, and tends to forget its moral or authoritative basis, the negative ironist chooses the opposite option. The negative ironist has a bad reputation with both the polis and its political critics, and not without reason: he is the "moralist" in the abstract sense. The negative ironist renounces all interest in the polis. He says, in his own defence, that he has renounced nothing more than the whims and foibles

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13. See especially, of course, A. Camus, The Rebel (1962).

of the polis: but, in reality, he has renounced all interest in convincing others of what is (rather than what appears) worthy or excellent. Conrad (1978, p.ix) says of the ironic novelist that "(she) has less power than her most timorous character". This is because the negative ironist also agrees to segregate rule from authority. It is only possible, he says, to author speech - to speak self-consciously rather than ignorantly - by renouncing all interest (save a negative one) in substance, and hence in rule or power. The negative ironist, in placing himself aloof from all matters of substance, places himself also outside the power of discourse. His concern for worth construes itself as necessitating an indifference to power. The negative ironist forgets the spirited and substantial nature (i.e. the power) of what is best. Above all, he forgets the need that "the best" has to become spirited and substantial.

Our claim is this: that positive irony belongs, deeply woven, in the fabric of the polis because of the calling it answers to keep alive and develop moral discourse. Negative irony purifies moral discourse by segregating it from life. By repeatedly emphasizing the Difference between life and the Idea, the negative ironist lets sink into oblivion the need for the theorist's calling to be the best life. The positive ironist, within the polis, belongs within the tradition that integrates rule and speech. Rule he treats as a matter of discourse rather than naked power. The positive ironist seeks to reveal to the minds of his listeners the deeply traditional composure of style and authorship that genuinely rules. However frequent, since Thrasyarches, since Hobbes, since yesterday, the segregation within speech of speech and rule, we always have the deep need to re-address and develop our life within Tradition and the logoi.

CHAPTER ONETHE NEGATIVE IRONIST IN DIALOGUE

Persons of the Dialogue:

The Theorist, who also narrates to the reader or listener

The Negative Ironist, who defends Socrates

Soren Kierkegaard, who accuses Socrates

The scene is set for an attempt towards self-education. We must now invite the negative ironist to reveal himself in conversation. We must do this, not simply in order to see him more clearly - for, in a way, we have already seen him clearly. Clarity alone is not enough here. Instead, we invite the negative ironist to speak (rather than be spoken about) so that he can re-experience the passion of his interest and thus develop it. The negative ironist can never learn if he remains our passive listener, or even an actor in our play: for it would still be our play. That is, as long as he feels he is ultimately controlled by us, he will remain outside of the action. He may even resolve to change, in response to what he hears - but he will not genuinely resolve the issue, that is, learn or develop. So we must set the scene for a dialogue.

This will not be a simple matter. The problem for the negative ironist is that usually he does not get (or especially seek) the opportunity to speak. His notion of the city is that it does not provide the opportunity for him to speak. Of course, I mean: to speak freely. The negative ironist speaks, but since his speech is oriented to the complacency of the city, in effect he speaks in accusation of the city or in defence against the city's accusation of him. That is, although his speech is subtle, it is subtle defence or subtle attack. First

and last, he is consumed by the antagonism between the polis and himself. So in this sense, his subtlety is not genuine. Because it is aimed at sugaring the pill of polemic and contention, his subtlety is more akin to obscurantism than suggestiveness. His notion is that since the city is easy to see through and understand, to be unlike the city requires being difficult to see through and understand. So although everything he says is animated by his attitude towards the city, yet he is not interested in being heard by his omnipresent interlocutor. We are, in fact, beginning to grasp that although the negative ironist thinks the city does not provide him the place to speak, what is more deeply true is that it is he who fails to generate an interest in speaking freely. His negativity towards the city provides him with a powerful motive for not speaking his mind. We are so accustomed to this that we are inclined to think of the ironist simply as - someone who does not speak his mind. We forget to ask: what principle does (or must) the ironist follow in not speaking his mind?

Now here we are, on the threshold of a dialogue, asking the negative ironist to speak his mind! Certainly he seems to have turned it into a matter of principle not to do this. He might suspect us of asking him to go against his principles - which, incidentally, means that we will have to put him off his guard, somehow. As for his principles: the strange thing about him is that, because he never (or rarely) speaks his mind, he does not really know his own mind! Now surely this is the strangest thing of all about the negative ironist! And given this, how can he be principled? For, how is it possible to genuinely not speak his mind if he has only a weak sense of what it would involve to speak his mind? The truth is that our friend, the

negative ironist, does not really know himself at all: he has not befriended even himself. Strictly speaking, he is unable, at this point, either to speak his mind or to not speak his mind. He does not succeed in not speaking his mind: he simply fails to speak his mind. I maintain, then, that the strong sense of not speaking one's mind requires as strong a sense of speaking freely and enjoyably. The ironist must be more than merely or habitually indirect: when he decides to be indirect, this decision must itself have reason or direction. This gives us a grasp of the place for not speaking our mind. The ironist is not one who always shuns speaking his mind (as if that item of behaviour were worthy of being called a principle) but rather, one who is able to serve his direction by deciding to speak or not to speak his mind. The ironist must be oriented to the problem of when it is best not to speak his mind: this requires that he know what his mind is.

Come then, Negative Ironist, and hear what I want to suggest to you. I want to introduce someone to you whom you will, I think, be very interested in meeting. His name is Soren: Soren Kierkegaard. Soren, in fact, is already very anxious to talk with you: he seems to be very concerned about who you are and above all, what you have to say (or not say!) And there is every opportunity for you to get to know one another well enough to justify a little informality here. But, my friend, let me tell you a little more about Soren.

NEGATIVE IRONIST: Thank you very much. I only wish everyone took as much interest in these matters as yourself, my theorist friend! Then the world would be a rose-coloured place to live in.....



THEORIST: Well, now, listen, what I'm suggesting in fact is that it isn't only me who is interested in conversing with you. That's exactly why I want you to meet Soren - so that you can see this for yourself. But please don't frown - I'm not trying to put you on the spot. It's just that I am genuinely interested in your "story". After all, your style shows that you don't simply take the world as it comes, do you?

NEGATIVE IRONIST: Well.....I suppose not.....in some way.

THEORIST: (Laughingly) No two ways about it! Anyhow, what was I saying? I was telling you about Soren. As it happens, he has just written a dissertation about - I don't want to intimidate you, or anything - well, it is about you, or at least, someone he thinks is very like you.

NEGATIVE IRONIST: Who do you mean?

THEORIST: Soren's work is about Socrates. He considers Socrates to be the epitome of negative irony.

NEGATIVE IRONIST: That's interesting! So do I! And you needn't worry about intimidating me. I'm not afraid of whatever he's written - who knows, it might be helpful. Did you say he was coming to see you today?

THEORIST: You would like to meet him, then?

NEGATIVE IRONIST: Certainly - why not?

THEORIST: Good. He's due any minute now, in fact. I'll introduce you. I think it will be a rare opportunity for you to really test yourself. But hush! I think I hear him now. Hello Soren! I'm glad



you could come. I'd like you to meet a friend of mine, the Negative Ironist.

KIERKEGAARD: Pleased to meet you. Our theorist friend here mentioned you to me. I've been looking forward to meeting you. It isn't every day I run into a Negative Ironist!

NEGATIVE IRONIST: No, that's true enough. I'm told you have a special interest in the subject. Can I ask you - what is your view of irony - I mean, in its overall significance?

I must break into the conversation here, to relate what happened next. Soren - whom I still didn't know very well, in fact, he was little more than a name to me - settled back into his chair and proceeded to discourse at length about the different versions of Socrates we have. I checked later and discovered to my amusement that he was more or less quoting from memory lengthy chunks of his dissertation, called The Concept of Irony<sup>1</sup>. There was much explanation of the differences between Xenophon, Plato and Aristophanes, and the difficulty of arbitrating between them, and my friend and I started feeling uncertain what we were doing there. We were giving each other glances, shuffling our feet, when suddenly, Soren came to the point. We returned our attention to the conversation. Soren continued:

KIERKEGAARD: Socrates' dialogues do not simply end without a result, they end with a negative result. They do not simply break off before a result is attained, they actually negate some result that has been attained.// A negative result always presupposes there is a result, and a negative result in its purest and most undiluted form can only be provided by irony. Whereas even scepticism always posits something, irony, like the old witch, constantly makes the tantalizing attempt

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1. S.Kierkegaard, The Concept of Irony (1968). In the following dialogue, direct quotations from this work are indicated by a double oblique stroke, amended quotations by a single stroke.

first to devour everything in sight, then to devour itself too.// (p.92)

NEGATIVE IRONIST: I hear an objection in what you are saying to Socratic conversation itself, that is, the questioning of conventions or opinions which shows them to be thoughtless. Yet your objection is only possible given your failure to understand that this questioning of the familiar is itself the point of Socratic conversation - rather than, as you imply should be the case, the generation of "solutions", or yet further "positive" results. God knows there are enough of those in the world as it is. The Socratic task is to question these "positive" results. Alright if it "presupposes" the existence of these results. That's not the fault of negative irony: that's simply how it finds the world.

KIERKEGAARD: On the contrary, that's how it finds itself. Because it is always negating, negative irony has nothing to grasp. Everything disappears. Hegel was right when he said that //for irony nothing is serious//. /For the ironist is not at all serious about the virtues he practices, since true seriousness is only possible in a totality/. (p.254).

NEGATIVE IRONIST: That's absolutely true: true seriousness is only possible in a totality. But this totality can never be completely grasped or spoken. I agree that the ironist does not take anything, especially himself, seriously - if by that you mean that he does not imagine himself able to constitute, in his speech, this totality. But surely it is wrong to say that this is unserious? In fact, it seems to indicate a belief on your part that true seriousness would mean attempting precisely to bespeak the totality, to say everything, as it were. Irony, however, depends for its force on a concep-

tion of essential difference, the difference between speech and what is Other to speech. This "totality" you speak of sounds more and more like the obliteration of this difference.

KIERKEGAARD: You are sounding very like Socrates, my friend. There is a disjuncture between speech and this abstract "Other" you refer to. /With Socrates too there is a disjuncture. The outer and the inner do not form a harmonious unity/.

NEGATIVE IRONIST: I wouldn't deny that. It is your notion of harmony that needs re-examining. It is premised on a notion of speech as a report or reproduction of something present to the speaker, something that is possessed with certainty.

KIERKEGAARD: Let's hold it for a moment here. You are missing the point. You said earlier that the Socratic task was to question. //Hence we must inquire further into what it means to ask questions// (p.71).//One may ask a question for the purpose of obtaining an answer containing the desired content, so that the more one questions, the deeper and more meaningful becomes the answer; or one may ask a question, not in the interest of obtaining an answer, but to suck out the apparent content with a question and leave only an emptiness remaining. The first method.....is the speculative (i.e. positive), the second the ironic. Now it was the latter method which was especially practiced by Socrates// (p.73).

NEGATIVE IRONIST: But look, your discomfort with the "lack of content" of Socrates' speech really only shows all the more your desire that speech must appropriate some "real" thing. You have succumbed to the temptation to place speech first, as that which appropriates or even constitutes, rather than second to that Other

that appropriates even it: the Logos. Your commitment to answers in response to questions reveals your search for the speech that brings everything - the totality you spoke of earlier - to presence. You want to overcome what is essential to man - his dependency on what is Other, on what grants speech - by refusing to acknowledge what is Other. But this "overcoming" of what is essential is the impossible ambition of hubris: nothing else.

KIERKEGAARD: I suppose it's "hubris" as well to have any attachments whatsoever. That's what it sounds like. This is the most basic thing about negative irony. It is so free-floating and detached, it doesn't actually love anything in any genuine sense. Listen to how Socrates spoke about love, in The Symposium. // Love is emancipated more and more from the accidental concretion in which it appeared in the preceding discourses (of the guests) and reduced to its most abstract determination. It exhibits itself not as the love of this or that, for this or that, but as the love of something which it has not, i.e., as desire, longing. // What Socrates does not address is the positive side of love. // When we speak of abiding in love, we are speaking of participation in a fullness. This is the substantial aspect of love. Desire, longing, on the other hand, is (merely) the negative aspect of love // (pp.82-3).

NEGATIVE IRONIST: You talk of "abiding and participating in a fullness", but that implies cancelling out the Otherness of what is desired. The philosopher is a lover (of wisdom) because of his desire for what is lacking, i.e. for what is Other. He does not want to appropriate it, but rather to re-collect it. Other is lacking: that is, not simply accidentally missing, but essentially absent through not being locatable in any particular place or time. Yet although it

is absent, it is real or essential: it is what grants and supports speech. So the speech that loves - the philosopher's speech - wants to turn towards what is Other rather than away from it into the exigencies of production and usage. Love inhabits the world of exigencies (since of course, it lacks what is Other), but it is not limited to being an exigency, since it is oriented to what it lacks through its desire. This is the meaning of Diotima's lesson.

KIERKEGAARD: /All of this, however, is utterly void of content/.  
 //The result arrived at is actually the indeterminate determination of pure being: love is; for to add: it is longing, desire, is no determination at all but merely a relation to something not given//.(p.83).

NEGATIVE IRONIST: So your idea of a "determination", then, is that it is a relation to something given? Speech as the making of determinations relates given things to other given things. Yes. Speech is designed to give us things. But The Symposium, we recall, shows us that love is the re-collection of what cannot be given (of what gives speech). So speech that gives us things cannot be a speech that loves, a philosopher's speech. Perhaps it is you who doesn't truly love, but merely pretends to?

KIERKEGAARD: Perhaps I'm not making myself plain. At any rate, you are still missing my fundamental point about irony. I'll try to set it out more clearly. The basic problem is this. //Irony in the eminent sense directs itself not against this or that particular existence, but against the whole given actuality of a certain time and situation. It has, therefore, an apriority in itself, and it is not by successively destroying one segment of actuality after the other that it arrives at its total view, but by virtue of this that it destroys in the particular. It is not this or that phenomenon, but the

totality of existence which it considers sub specie ironiae// (p.271)

NEGATIVE IRONIST: There is something very strange lurking around somewhere in what you are saying, though I'm uncertain what it is. What you say seems to make sense enough, but there is something odd. Yes! It's hit me now! It's to do with what you said about the "given actuality". Listen! On the one hand, you say that Socrates' irony is directed against the given actuality around him - as a whole. Yet at the same time, you also say that irony does not direct itself "against this or that particular existence". Clearly, then, you do not regard the "whole given actuality" of a certain time and place - for example, fifth century Athens - as a particular existence. But if not, then you show that you are oblivious to the difference between what is a thing (e.g. the "actuality" of fifth-century Athens) and what is not a thing (what is Other than the many things it makes possible). What is so special about the "whole given actuality"? It may be larger than the particular things within it, but (as a whole) it is no different in kind from them. You are like Woody Allen, appealing to the same reality as Hobbes, only bigger - except that he was joking whereas you are actually serious!

KIERKEGAARD: It is you, not me, who is quibbling in a ridiculous way about the size (!) of reality. I never intended anything to do with that. The point I am actually driving at is that thought needs to appeal to something real rather than abstract: it needs something to grasp hold of. The negative ironist denies this. For example, consider Socrates' attitude towards death. Socrates says that he is not afraid of death because he does not know what it will bring him: it may well result in a much better state of being. Now how is it possible to actually find pleasure in this way in ironic uncertainty?

NEGATIVE IRONIST: Do you think it would be better not to speak about what we are uncertain of? What Socrates is attempting to teach here is that this is actually the greatest test for thought. To remain silent about what is uncertain - and death is the most uncertain thing - makes way for fear to establish itself. Socrates is saying: the uncertainty of death is taken by most people to justify fear of death, but not by me. I will talk openly about death: uncertainty does not stop us from talking about something. In order to be courageous, we must be strong enough not to allow uncertainty to rob us of the faculty of speech.

KIERKEGAARD: I certainly was not recommending silence or fear towards death: what you say about these things is of course right. But equally certainly, we need to do more than simply bask in the uncertainty of death. This requires of us a negativity that is not good for us. // One must be accustomed to being edified by the reassurances residing in nothingness in order to find repose in this (view of death) // (p.118)

NEGATIVE IRONIST: Now I fear for you. Given what you say, you will always be afraid of death. You are only reassured by the possession of knowledge or worse still, belief. Since knowledge of death is impossible, you admit belief: we need faith, you say. Yet belief, even more than the kind of knowledge you mean, is predicated on the notion of being shared. You seek your security in sharing rather than take the plunge and commit yourself to the work of re-collecting the difference between what can be shared and what is Other. It is impossible to share what is Other since it is that which makes the very notion of sharing possible. Only things can be shared, because sharing is as much an appropriation as private ownership is. What is Other



cannot be shared because it cannot be appropriated. So it is up to each of us to re-collect the grounds of our speech and our lives: we cannot rely on others to do this for us. Your would-be reliance on knowledge and belief is a reliance on sharing: that is, a reliance on the polis rather than on the strength of principle. Principle is the re-collection of what is Other.

KIERKEGAARD: /Every time I present a positive complaint, you think it is a simple matter to refute it by means of your ignorance/. (p.195).

NEGATIVE IRONIST: Which ignorance is that?

KIERKEGAARD: Why, the ignorance of your whole standpoint - the Socratic ignorance itself! Negative irony, as is becoming increasingly clear with every word you utter, banishes all knowledge: it dissolves knowledge in irony, so as to celebrate the aporia, our glorious ignorance! We've seen plenty of examples already, but perhaps the best one of all we have not mentioned yet. When the Delphic oracle tells Socrates he is the wisest of all men, yes, even then, when knowledge seems to be inescapable, Socrates manages to escape. His negativity comes to his rescue. Around he goes, ironizing everybody until he convinces himself that he is indeed the wisest of all - but simply because the only thing he knows is that he knows nothing! This, then, is the ignorance through which Socrates, and you too, slide away from everything. Socrates managed to evade (at least from his own point of view) every complaint made by his accusers by simply protesting ignorance. Glorious ! The accusers missed the only solution, // (They) ought to have accused him of this very ignorance which.....especially in the Greek state, must be regarded as a felony. // (p.195).

NEGATIVE IRONIST: You are finally revealing yourself in your true light. Like the accusers, you treat Socratic ignorance as a crime against the polis. You are a partizan of the polis: you represent the speech of the polis!

KIERKEGAARD: And your reaction is no better than that of Socrates. It is full of empty indignation! Just like the Apology - where //there appears, usually after the most passionate outbursts, an argumentation which blows away the lather of eloquence and reveals nothing underneath// (p.117).

NEGATIVE IRONIST: How strikingly you re-produce the speech of Socrates' accusers! Even more strikingly, your speech is as open to theirs to the rejoinder made by Socrates. The accusers, just like you, warned others to be on guard against Socrates' eloquence. He replies: "To say this, when they were certain to be detected as soon as I opened my lips and proved myself to be anything but a great speaker, did indeed appear to me most shameless". (Apology 17 b-c). Shameless: yes indeed.

KIERKEGAARD: The irony of Socrates' situation repeats itself. Are you really uninterested in responding to the point I have been making all along about irony, or are you so wrapped up in it that you can only rail against me? I see no indications of a response so far. It's the same as the irony of the Apology itself. //There is absolutely no point of connection between the attack and the defence// (p.122). Instead of taking up his accusers' charges and addressing them in their particularity, Socrates simply reverts to his ignorance: "since I am ignorant", he says, in effect, "how could I have introduced new doctrines?" This was precisely the new doctrine he was introducing!

NEGATIVE IRONIST: There is only an absence of connection if you conceive "connection" to mean: explicit reference to the same topic. That you do mean this comes as no surprise at all, given your notion of shared knowledge and belief. Making a connection, for you, means, sharing knowledge or belief: agreeing to talk about the same things, or not to talk about the same things. It is the rule of polite convention. Certainly, in this sense, there is no connection between Socrates' defence and the accusation. So much the better for Socrates! Yet, is it not amazing that the Athenian polis could react so strongly to something that supposedly had no connection? Why, if there is no connection, did the polis go to such lengths to curb Socrates? We see, in fact, that it is sheer nonsense to say there is "no connection". The connection, on the contrary, is very strong indeed: Socrates' life, in its exemplary character, goes to the very heart of the polis, in all its sleepiness and dissoluteness - and the polis reacts defensively. Only an accuser, blinded in his determination not to be challenged by Socrates, could imagine that Socrates' speech has no connection, and yet at the same time experience such discomfort, and react so vehemently, towards the Socratic commitment. Outrage is always blind. You are outraged at Socrates' so-called "unsociability" towards the polis: and in your complete blindness, you are unwilling to actually consider the alternative being offered by Socrates. As a matter of fact, there is no point of contact between your attack and Socrates' speech, Your attack, from the beginning, has been grounded unstintingly in the polis: Socrates demands at least an initial willingness to let go of this.

KIERKEGAARD: Well, it seems there is little point in my saying any more to try to convince you. But it is you who needs to question

your attitude. Something, I don't know what, has prevented you from giving me a proper hearing. I hope we can meet again and find some basis for a better rapport. Farewell.

NEGATIVE IRONIST: Well, there he goes - leaving when it gets too tough for him. I've never met such fervent hostility and sheer blind bloody-mindedness in my whole life!

THEORIST: And I'll surmise that you've never spoken so directly in your whole life. Perhaps you would like to continue in the same vein, by explaining a few things to me. You see, I'd like to hear more about this notion of yours that Soren relies on "sharing" - and also your charge that he is somehow looking for a "bigger reality" to appeal to as his ground. What did you mean?

NEGATIVE IRONIST: It's going to take some time to explain. But, in fact, I'm glad of the chance to try to work out what was wrong with him, and the kind of commitment it is that completely stops people from listening. I always end up explaining what I wanted to explain after the other has gone away!

THEORIST: There's a poignancy to that that you should think about. But anyhow, I'm still here, and I have time enough, so please continue.

NEGATIVE IRONIST: Right. Let me see then. Clearly, Kierkegaard was totally rejecting irony and accusing it of something: so we need to explain that. What was the basis for his rejection and accusation?

The basic thing, it seems clear, about Kierkegaard's talk was his unswerving faith in some "totality" that could actually be known, or even stated in discourse. It is an ideal of total self-transparency, total self-knowledge: and the problem with it is, not merely that

it is impossible, but that the pursuit of it makes men forget the real reason why it is impossible. The reason it is impossible is because speech is necessarily grounded in what is Other to speech. The ideal of realized totality - otherwise known to us in the guise of "the end of history" - denies this Otherness. It reduces what is necessarily (and irreducibly) Other by attempting to somehow incorporate it within speech, familiarize it, or in effect simply to deny it.

So it is Kierkegaard who does not genuinely take irony seriously. I will attempt to show that irony must ultimately disappear within the "totality" of discourse he posits. After all, if irony is the recollection of the dependence of speech on what is Other, then to deny what is Other is really to deny irony.

Now then: for Kierkegaard, irony is merely a transitory moment within a development from which it disappears. We heard Kierkegaard a while ago draw on Hegel: to me he seems to be of one mind with Hegel on the problem of irony. It is Hegel, of course, who develops the metaphor of History as the progressive totalizing of discourse. The end of History is the complete speech. History is now the metaphor for the "totality" that would make us oblivious to what is Other.

Yet there is, supposedly, a place for irony in the midst of all this. This is because the totality (complete speech) needs to develop. It develops through the process of history, understood now in the more concrete sense. Through the apparent vicissitudes of history, the cunning of Reason is at work. And this cunning of Reason is very akin to irony. Yet, at a particular time in history, irony took on a much more specific role than this. This turns out to be none other than the role embodied and personified by Socrates himself. It was through

Socrates that irony - as we see in retrospect - effected an important and particular historical change, within the grand framework of History with a capital "H".

Hegel's edifying story, modified but not fundamentally altered by Kierkegaard, is about the change from the ancient to the modern world: a change reflected in all areas of social life and thought. The ancient world is that which is ruled by the substantial character of tradition. Truth is held by everyone to reside in the community, its customs, and its laws. Morality is accepted as given: it is not the subject of inquiry or question. The self is constituted through its acceptance of the substantial beliefs and values of the community. In contrast, in the modern world, morality is re-achieved within the self. The self now becomes a subject: it decides within itself the rightness of its actions. This change has occurred over a great period of time. In philosophy, we see this development epitomized in Descartes. Parmenides, the ancient, was interested in Being - whereas Descartes wants to provide an absolute basis for knowledge in what is certain, i.e. self-evident, to the knower. From Being (substance) to knowledge (subject): this is how the story has it.

Socrates is seen as a catalyst in this change. His life was devoted to questioning the values and moral decisions of his contemporaries - who belonged to our "ancient world". Socrates was the first to introduce the question "why" into the realm of substantive activity. Socrates, that is, began to transform activity from a mere substance to self-conscious, accountable, decision. The story, then, tells how Socrates gave birth to the subject (rather than tradition, or the community) as the author of discourse. All of the old, taken for granted ways must be questioned in toto from this new standpoint. The subject

certain only of what is self-evident, no longer relying on communal dictates: this is who is being brought to birth through the maieutics of Socrates' irony.

Socrates, then, plays the historical role of inaugurating the site of the subject, as it is called by some. Kierkegaard was relying on some notion such as this: in addressing the practices and ideas that his interlocutors take for granted, Socrates is insisting on the necessity that the self become the subject or author of discourse. The substantive, concrete, and dogmatic imperatives of action that have hitherto been accepted, must now be re-processed, submitted to a complete reworking from a new vantage point, that of the individual subject certain of itself and its self-evident precepts. Only what can be discovered in this way will count as knowledge.

It is Socratic irony that shows others the falsity or the limited character of their opinions. Socratic irony brings out the difference between action that is merely habitual and practical and action that is oriented and self-reflective. Socrates begins with particular actions, concerns, or speeches, but he always moves beyond what is merely particular to what is higher: the idea that collects and gathers the particular thing with its kind. So Kierkegaard seems to be on the brink of understanding, in this version, that Socrates' irony is not directed against this or that particular that he chances upon, but rather against the mistake of resting with this or any particular. Socrates' irony shows the barrenness of the merely practical life. We are on the brink - of what? We have here the outline of an acceptance of the difference between what is concrete (the thing) and what is Other or higher (the Idea). Concrete things could always be otherwise: that is, they are contingent. The Idea is always itself and cannot be otherwise: it is essential.



My hopes for a fruitful development of this were dashed once and for all by what Kierkegaard had to say about "the whole given actuality". Here his commitment came through loud and clear: you heard it too. He exempted the whole given actuality of a particular time and place from being a particular existence. This is absolutely decisive. If we can formulate why he makes this exemption, our understanding of Kierkegaard will be much strengthened. First, though, this much is clear: to make this exemption is to lose the distinction between things and the Idea that Kierkegaard had seemed to be on the point of respecting a moment ago. It is to turn a particular historical situation, which is actually in the realm of things (it is merely a list, if you like, of things) into something higher: and this is deeply wrong and false.

So I'm asking: what commitment makes Kierkegaard exempt the total historical situation, or as he calls it, "the whole given actuality" from its qualification as a thing (or perhaps, many things)? Isn't this only intelligible within the project of essentializing history? The concrete "processes" or things that make up "history" get turned into a grand scheme called "History" that somehow collects them all. This is in tune with the attempt to turn Socrates into a disappearing moment within the great process - a moment necessary and important when it occurred but no longer relevant, in any significant sense, to the modern world. Irony is the complete emptiness, or lack of substantive content, necessary for the birth of the subject. However, it is momentary, according to this view, since once the subject is brought into being, it needs to appropriate a new history for itself. It will no longer listen like a child to the stories that are handed down to it: for a moment (at the high point of irony) it is bereft of all stories, but henceforth, it tells its own story and appropriates it for itself.

The epic Homer develops through the ironic Socrates into the speculative and wise Hegel. Within the process, Socratic irony has a significant role, but also one that is self-liquidating.

Irony captures the work of the Hegelian "antithesis" in historical development. Irony makes room for development by exposing the untenability of the current opinion. Irony carries out its work by driving untenable opinions into a corner from which they cannot escape. Yet if irony allows for the emergence of what is new, it is itself, in this scheme, decisively less than the new development. Irony alone cannot suffice, for it is seen as predatory. Instead, a new phase develops: nothing more or less than a new attempt to give a complete account of everything.

Now, as we know, Hegel does not ironize the attempt (in itself) on the part of opinion towards its self-completion. On the contrary, he subscribes to this very notion, as is shown by the idea of Absolute Knowledge. The telos of irony is its own disappearance in the Absolute Truth that is beyond irony: the good of irony is the merely instrumental good of moving us, through history, from "ignorance" to "knowledge". Irony is not enough for Hegel, because the very fact that it is still needed dissatisfies him. In the fully developed science of logic, irony will not be necessary.

Irony, essentially, is the re-collection of the difference between the concrete and what is Other (the essential). To treat this difference as one that disappears at "the end of history" is one and the same thing as to treat irony as a disappearing necessity. Irony is reduced to the functional: it becomes the functionary serving History. Mathematically it might be expressed: irony is a function

of History. In this notion, the difference between concrete and essential (the incomplete and the complete) is treated like an agenda: once it is worked through, it ceases to be operative. The agenda is closed. The "irony" merely lies in not knowing at the beginning how the discussion will proceed. At the time, however, we are concerned with the discussion: it is only afterwards, like Wordsworth's "emotion re-collected in tranquility", that the irony can surface. Irony turns out retrospectively to have been a then unapprehended feature of an experience that is now passed: the very availability of the irony depends on its having disappeared. It is absent in that it is merely present to memory. Most radically, then, Hegel might be saying: irony can only be recalled, not enacted. Socrates, somehow, was stepping ahead of himself by seeking to practice irony. An irony practiced can only be negative (because it has not yet achieved any substantial insight of its own): Socratic irony is thus a kind of hubris. The practice of irony is always unwarranted: it is only the recollection of it that we are entitled to.

Knowledge of irony, then, is also a transcendence of it: so its disappearance is a basic requirement for the development of knowledge.

Now, I maintain that if we consider this "story of irony", or more particularly, what it makes of Socrates, we will see that it is a reductionist gloss on the true development of the Idea. The Idea develops in conversation. Our Kierkegaard or our Hegel would probably agree with this, at least in some sense: well and good. But what do they make of the Socratic conversation? They treat it as a monolithic conflict between "subjectivity" and "the substantive community". Each

of the conversations is merely epiphenomenal upon this theme. Now this is to forget utterly the diversity of things within the unity of the Logos. Socrates discourses with the many and different temptations to forget the real difference: the difference between what is diverse and what is One or Other. To put it very baldly, we could say that by treating the diversity of Athens as "the whole given actuality", Kierkegaard is barking up the wrong tree. He wants to treat things (which are contingent and diverse) as One. Only that which is not a thing, that which is Other than things, is One. Socrates himself would never dream of speaking of an existing community in this way.

However, this reflection on misplaced totality in Kierkegaard and Hegel isn't really the point. What is more important is the question it prompts: what motivates it? What commitment does it show? My contention is that it betrays a commitment to a concretely unified community: that is, an interest in re-presenting social order in speech. The problem of community gets reduced to a problem of social order because of the story's adherence to History. Hegel says we are now prepared to appropriate Absolute Knowledge: and this is something communal, shared, common. At the most significant level, there is consensus - whatever concrete disagreements there might be. It's as if, somehow, the whole of western civilization has reached a stage where each of us is universal: all is resolvable into the consensus of the universal, and will be so resolved. The story, then, in all its magnitude, depends on our mutual consent to the consensus - to our common sharing of knowledge.

The community, rather than the difference between things (e.g. the community) and what is Other, is made to serve as the limit that will be respected. In this forgetting of what is Other, this produc-

tion of speech as first, speakers' commitments are turned towards the sharing of what can be accounted as common. The community - what can be common or shared - sets the limits of the appropriable. Thus respect for community as what limits speech, and the notion of knowledge as a cumulative appropriation, go hand in hand. Speakers now become owners of ideas by their development through dialectic: speakers accumulate and appropriate their experiences as a stable, substantive, "body of knowledge".

The commitment to social order and the commitment to History are the same. Any given (unified) social order is but a crystallized moment in the progression of History. Every subsequent stage looks back on the preceding ones with a detachment that is a travesty of irony. The work of predecessors becomes a mere moment in the development of an aloof maturity. Nothing of the actual struggle itself remains to inspire the later achievement - if "achievement" is what it is. For a moment is a necessary part of a dialectic, and in that sense shapes irrevocably what follows: yet it is only a moment, and since it has supposedly been surpassed, it cannot be exemplary for what follows. That is truly objectionable. Socrates, for example, has nothing to teach us! We have all wonderfully progressed so as not to need him! There is a casualness - no, almost a callousness - towards history here: somehow it has caused the present, yet it cannot teach the present. History is taken very seriously in this view - if we agree to call "serious" a submission to history only in its consequences and not in its own speeches. It seems we are like the latest model at the car show: superior to the last even if shaped by it.

There is nothing exemplary in the past for the present because although History connects them, it does so from outside of them. Particular historical events are ultimately judged by History: thus History is above both past and present. Now what if the particular historical event we just happen to be interested in is irony (Socrates). Irony is judged by History: yet History, Hegel says, is none other than the cunning of Reason. It is itself an Irony: Irony judges irony! Clearly, two ironies are being talked about here: a small irony, as a practice carried out in a particular time and place, and a grand irony, called History, carried on by Reason at all times and in all places. The latter, in its ubiquity, is placed in judgement on the former. Thus to assert the necessity of Socratic irony as a phase of transformation is to speak on behalf of History. For has not History, in retrospect, clearly shown the justification of Socrates' anticipatory irony in the subsequent development of the subject? How else to understand the development of our civilization? This is the sort of bland gloss I imagine our Kierkegaard would make, anyhow.

In the grand scheme, everything dies quietly and without a murmur, it seems. At least it seems so to our transcendental Historian, waving his hand cheerily over the pyres of the past, and graciously distributing the obiter dicta that stand him for obituaries. Maybe even Socrates will be successfully consigned into the mush of dying for the sake of the dialectic. In hindsight, it is clear to us that the Athenian state's treatment of Socrates was against the historical grain, and thus futile: from the standpoint of the grand irony of History, it can thus be treated as in insignificant episode. It can be viewed in a detached way, as merely another instance of "the universal irony of the world". So long as we speak from the viewpoint of

History, then, Socrates too dies quietly. Let's wish him goodbye and all the best!

Kierkegaard's indifference towards the past and its work is oriented to the difference - decisive, as they think, incidental, as I maintain - between the past and the present. History as the accumulation of knowledge is the progressive expansion by the collectivity of its limits. To respect the present limits of knowledge, then, it is necessary to be indifferent to those limits oriented to by earlier stages of the dialectic. Like Weber's bureaucrat, our attitude to the past ought to be *sine ira ac studio*, neither condemning it, since it respected the limits of its own time, nor advocating it, since it does not address the limits of ours.

But there is trouble looming. Socrates will not lie down so quietly after all, perhaps. Socrates and his death create deep problems for the transcendental Historical perspective. For once, as we saw earlier, the veneer breaks down and some passion or even vehemence surfaces. Now it is by reflecting on the disparity between the apparently normal detachment and this sudden turbulence that we can grasp the true axis around which the whole standpoint revolves. We can get at this by asking: why is it Socrates who frustrates both Hegel and Kierkegaard to the point where their carefully constructed detachment breaks down? Why is the transcendentalist driven to say that Socratic irony "must be regarded as a felony"?

A felony is a crime that seriously offends the community. The criminal is one whose actions or speeches give offence to the community. By contrast, legitimate speech is the speech that respects and maintains the limits of the polis. Speech achieves legitimacy by its acceptance



of communal limits - that is, by its commitment to the sharing of knowledge. To question rather than to share or collude in knowledge, then, is to run the risk of offending the polis - the greater, the more deeply the questioning is pursued. Now this fact in itself hardly surprises us: it is precisely what we expect. But what is truly objectionable is the exoneration of the polis by those who claim to legislate on its behalf. For this is what Hegel and Kierkegaard do. The transcendental discourse of History sets out the limits of communal speech from a higher position. Speech is to achieve legitimacy by respecting the dialectical stage (the "limit") already reached by the community. Perhaps more is in fact legitimate, however: but this "more" is simply to push movement towards the next historical phase. We are back to the agenda, as it were. Someone will be needed to move the discussion on to the next item: this requires, admittedly, a good sense of timing, but nothing more. What is definitely illegitimate is to question the very idea of the agenda, with all that it implies. In fact, Kierkegaard put it more strongly; to do this is actually criminal.

If we want to understand the sense of this charge against Socrates, we need to examine what this view intends by legitimate or law-abiding speech. What kind of law is in question here? What is the problem facing the law-maker, according to Hegel and Kierkegaard?

As we have seen, it is a problem of consensus or social order. Since the goal of all progress - what a terrible idol that has proved to be to the West! - is the achievement of a substantive, concrete completion or unity, then the question of speech becomes a question of order. The complete or unified speech requires the achievement of order; the orderly relationship of the totality of

parts. The science of logic is the paradigm for the orderly society. And, just to emphasise this point, and give it its proper weight: this is no accident. The reason for this equation is to be found in the two pillars on which it rests: speech or knowledge strives towards substantive fullness or completeness, concretely appropriated as such, and society is the collection of speeches. Society is itself a concrete, substantive, unity or orderly relationship of parts. Society is a manifest articulation of speeches (which more recently came to be called institutions). Hence a crucial requirement for the striving of knowledge, so conceived, is the integration of society: the acceptance by all of a common law governing the many individual speeches. Otherwise individual and society would remain sundered. Thus the standards governing the speaker's speech must be the same standards that govern the requirements of the polis. If the speaker pursues different standards, then he becomes again a mere individual, vainly seeking the heroic, in truth not surpassing the anarchic.

What kind of law can achieve the integration of society so necessary for the development of knowledge into a totality? A law that defines the credentials of knowledge in terms of its shareable, exchangeable character. In order to be shareable, knowledge must first of all be of such a nature that it can be owned. It must be possible to appropriate knowledge before it can be appropriated in common. In short, knowledge must be a thing. The basic commandment of this law we can now state: treat knowledge as a thing. Only then will it have a stable, objective, character, involving description, attribution, listing of features, and so on: that is, only this will permit ownership and accumulation of knowledge. And only in this way will social progress be guaranteed.



In this bland and unquestioning process, the subject is treated as the agency that appropriates demonstrable knowledge and makes it evident to the community of listeners by displaying how anybody else could have produced, and, through discourse, can share, this knowledge.

It was Socrates' refusal to orient to the standard of the polis that led to his condemnation by the Athenian assembly. In other words, the assembly constituted its membership and gave expression to it through its insistence upon respect for the firstness of community as the very criterion for lawful membership of it. Its members concretized the notion of community: they treated community as the exchange of things, and Socratic ignorance as criminal.

Kierkegaard too speaks from the basis of his acceptance of the firstness of community. His speech about Socrates consequently takes on, as we saw, all the violence of the accusers' speeches. The detachment of the perspective of History is revealed as a veneer. What we have done is to scratch the surface of this detachment to expose the passionate rejection of (Socratic) inquiry that lies beneath it. In practice, as we have seen, the perspective of History concedes all responsibility to the "given totality": this is because the criterion of judgement it accepts is identical to the concretized community's criterion. "Treat knowledge as a thing". At the particular stage of history, the community, seeing itself concretely, deems this to be required. At the level of History, the complete speech, seeing itself concretely, deems it to be required in exactly equal measure. For the community, knowledge as a thing is necessary for order: for History, it is necessary for progress (or so-called "dialectic").

Socrates defends his ironic ignorance against the charges of the polis by questioning the difference between inquiring and merely sharing. This is the point of his story of how he acts in response to the Delphic oracle's advice that he is the wisest of men. Genuine inquiry requires re-collection of the difference between speech and the Logos that rules it, whereas sharing, as we have now conclusively seen, obscures this difference. Although the polis wants to subject the Logos, it can at most only pretend to succeed. The Logos cannot be subjected, for it is that to which all speech is subject. So the accusations made against Socrates do not touch him, not, as Kierkegaard thinks, because of Socrates' adept avoidance of them, but because they are insensitive to the Logos. The accusers' speech cannot begin to address the life of the speaker who is sensitive to the Logos. By contrast, however, the polis is always within the Logos - although it pretends otherwise. The violence of the accusers' onslaught is the resistance of the polis against being sensitive to the Logos. The polis is lazy and indifferent: it has buried deep in obscurity all distant recollections of the nature of speech and the Logos. It has banished into oblivion the resonant life of speech: the life granted to speech by what is Other. The violence of the polis against Socrates (its desire to banish him) is the violence of keeping in oblivion the ironic sense of Other that goes beyond sharing.

Socrates does not plead with the polis: instead, his defence aims at addressing in a principled way the very grounds on which its charges are based. To have pleaded might have enabled Socrates to be acquitted - by the polis. Socrates, however, wants to genuinely acquit himself. Socrates acquits himself by not simply denying or rejecting the charges, but by raising as a matter for reflection the very com-

mitment to those charges and the concretized notion of community from which it springs. Socrates, even under pressure from the community, will test the community rather than plead (share) with it. Socrates will inquire rather than agree to treat knowledge as a thing: and he will do this at whatever risk to his own survival. That, my friend, is his real excellence and strength of commitment. We could ask for no more powerful vindication than the one provided here by Socrates - in response to the stubborn and recalcitrant modern personifications of the polis.

THEORIST: There has been a great deal to reflect on in what you say. First, let me say that it has been good to hear such forthright and strongly developed self-expression. Perhaps the fact (forgive me for saying this) that it is unusual for you can provide us with a question or two: we shall see. At any rate, as you imply, it is always good to hear a vindication of what is the best speech. The question I suggest we address ourselves to, as the best way of taking up what you have said, is: what would a true vindication of Socrates and his irony be? What would such a vindication amount to, and what would it require of us? Above all, with what rewards would it provide us? Everything, as it were, remains for us to enact and achieve.

We can agree, I'm sure, that to vindicate Socrates requires more than taking his side. It could never be enough simply to refute the other: for that treats the other's ignorance as the main point of focus. Consider Socrates himself in this respect: refutation is always, for him, an initial requirement for education and not an end in itself. You remember where he says, late in The Republic, that he and Thrasymachos have recently become friends! So, in hearing your

refutation of Kierkegaard, and reflecting on it, we must ask - what interest sustains it, and what does that interest require for development?

The real objection I hear in your talk against Hegel and Kierkegaard is that they seek to concretize the universal. You are prepared to admit, it seems to me, that they are not mere empiricists. They have an image of the whole: they do not restrict their view to the parts. The empiricist is interested in part or parts. At most he is interested in various combinations of parts or relationships between parts. We also must say: he is interested only in describing parts, not in addressing the good of the part. Such a concern, of course, requires a passion for the whole, and a particular kind of passion at that. But we will come to this shortly. As you will acknowledge, then, Hegel and Kierkegaard represent an interest in the whole. And in this, strangely enough, you see the basis of their promise. What you reject in them is that they insult the whole by speaking of it as - in Kierkegaard's case - "the whole given actuality". Negative irony, says Kierkegaard, is directed, not against this or that particular, but "the whole given actuality", or the spirit of the age, the Zeitgeist in its current manifestation. Precisely, you reply triumphantly: because what they treat as the whole (i.e. the given actuality) is only every thing. It is the collection of particularities that make up all things. Kierkegaard's offence is to pretend to be stronger than the empiricist while actually being no more than a pan-empiricist. He is interested in everything rather than the whole. His commitment to everything is like that of a cosmopolitan: this is his great superiority to the practical empiricist, you say. Instead of stirring the empiricist to question his opinions, as Socrates does, all that Hegel and Kierkegaard do is fit him neatly and

snugly into the pattern of History. For you, transcendentalism is a sham because secretly it is exceedingly interested in particular things. It does not remind us in the least of what is Other than the thing: instead, by freeing us from our bondage to this or that (the empiricist's bondage), it simply completes our enslavement to the thing, or rather, to every thing. With the transcendentalist, we all, whether we know it or not, belong to things as a whole. Hidden beneath our particular veneer we are all universal: the end of history is the common grasp of this. Universalism is achieved when in common we reject all "fanaticisms" of the particular.

You have, and show, a remarkable strength: a strength that must become a way of life rather than a corrective (to the universalism of every thing). The vigour of your reminder that the Whole is Other than every thing shows us your strength. As of yet, however, it remains a kind of brute strength, a mere strength of will, the strength that is driven rather than inspired by what it desires. What we need to express is the freeing of this strength such that it becomes genuinely ironic: such that it expresses this through its own interest rather than its relentless reminder.

As of yet, then, irony is a reminder but not a practice. It has reminded us of the Otherness of the whole: that the standard for our speech is not every thing. Now the negative ironist needs to be reminded - in a way that goes beyond mere reminding. He must be invited to practice. He has turned re-collecting the whole into stipulating its Otherness. He "reminds" others of this. Yet what does this achieve that a knot tied around a finger would not? The strength of the reminder (the one who reminds) must become the strength of the actor. For this is precisely what the negative ironist has forgotten. In the chasm the



negative ironist opens up between the thing and what is Other (the whole), any interest in particularity or practice vanishes. All things are really the same: different to what is Other. In a sense, then, it is a matter of indifference (for every thing, or event, is indifferent to any other) whether the Other is re-collected in speech. Even the speech that re-collects ("reminds"of) it is only another thing! This shows us something very important: that the negative ironist feels a deep insecurity. More: the negative ironist, although he wants others to treat him very seriously, deeply feels superfluous. His life is a matter of indifference to the Other. He can continue to respect what is Other (the source), but he cannot develop his love for it through a practice.

The negative ironist has a high estimation of his own worth - but only by default. His sense of his own worth lives off his sense of the lack of excellence in most others - in the polis or the community as a whole. Hence, since he begins with the absence of generosity towards the community, he ends resenting its self-regard. Every self-regard of the community he dismisses as mere pretence. He dismisses the community for its alleged blindness to what is Other. In the end, he dismisses practice.

Thus whereas the universalist is bland towards practice, the negative ironist is dismissive of it. The lack of generosity here derives from his failure to grasp Otherness's need to be bespoken. But not only this: in addition, he mistakes this failure for a special insight. It places him "above" the realm of the community and the realm of nature. He remains disinterested in community as an icon for the conversation of practices, and nature as an icon for the necessity that can be used. He remains dismissive rather than ironic (that is, just) towards communal practices and nature's necessities.

What is Other - the source of value - needs the work of giving value a life. Value can be given a life through practices: otherwise it remains, at most, at the level of a reminder. The grasp and enjoyment by us of what is valuable requires the generously engaged practice rather than the renunciation of it. To alienate what is Other leads to a souring or curdling of what is valuable: it is soured through the neglect of practices and curdled by the incessant "reminders" of Other.

We want the negative ironist to listen to our dissertation. For it is of him that the story is told. More to the point, it is of his work of coming to befriend Other's need for discourse. We begin to befriend this need when we treat things as inspirations rather than occasions to remind: that is, when we allow ourselves to be moved to formulate what is valuable.

Kierkegaard was moved but his motion gave offence to the negative ironist. As we saw, what gave offence was that Kierkegaard put community first. What moved Kierkegaard to speak was his notion of the absolute firstness of community. He rejected Socratic ignorance because of its refusal to accept this. So we can ask: what interest does Kierkegaard represent? What generates Kierkegaard's speech is his sense of awe towards the community. The community silences him in that he takes as given (i.e. unquestionable) the need for speech to treat community as first. Whenever Kierkegaard experiences his difference from the community, he is silent. He is awed by what he takes to be the source of all possible experience. In order to speak, Kierkegaard must limit the speakable (or knowable) to the sharable. Awe is the knowledge that it is the (awesome) power of community that underlies the knowable. The negative ironist did not formulate the

problem of awe, but instead sought to vindicate Socrates by merely refuting its representative. Instead, we need to teach awe by showing it the ironic speaker's relationship to community. We seek to teach awe by demonstrating the positive nature of that relationship, rather than merely confirm awe in its opinion of irony's negativity.

The Negative ironist, too, was moved: and his motion gave equal offence to Kierkegaard (or, as we now want to say, awe). But the negative ironist has begun to make a discovery: that, as things are, his anger is alien to him. It is alien and self-destructive to him in that all along he wanted to imagine transcending it, and yet it surfaces as the force animating his relationship to the community. Far from transcending the community, the negative ironist is angry at the community and what he sees as its obstinate and ignorant clinging to particularity. The negative ironist is beginning to experience his true relation to nature (via anger) and, more deeply, the need to reflect upon this problem if he is to free himself to exemplify rather than merely repeatedly remind.

## CHAPTER TWO

### ANGER AND PHYSIOLOGY

#### 1. Anger's risk and anger's Desire.

The desire to appeal to what is Other as if it were self-evident is an eternal temptation for the ideal speaker. The negative ironist makes this appeal repeatedly in the face of the deafness of the polis. And the appeal itself conveniently facilitates the bypassing of usage and practice - increasingly seen by the negative ironist as matters of the polis. So the "deafness of the polis" confirms the negative ironist in his abstraction, and the negative ironist's abstraction confirms for him the "deafness of the polis". There is a degeneration of spirit which drags down the negative ironist into his abstraction and his hatred of ignorance. The negative ironist becomes trapped: trapped within his own anger towards the polis. His anger towards the polis makes him forget who he is , or what his interests could be. His interest is increasingly defined through opposition, until he is finally interested in nothing but the Otherness of what is Other. And the recurrent experience of anger seems only to sustain this abysmal relationship. We know how, when anger swells up in us, we find it difficult to speak justly, to provide grounds for our affirmations, or to care about inviting anything other than anger in return. Anger involves the seemingly irresistible urge to appeal to self-evidence, and to become a mere polemicist. In the present chapter, we seek to address this problem as it has already emerged.

However, if anger could weaken the ironist by making him consume himself in denial, then this is the very time when we need to remember that anger could also, somehow, help to confirm the ideal speaker in

what he is. Our risk here would be simply to undermine anger itself, to repeat the action of negativity under some fresh guise. In the face of this, let us remember that anger also has the possibility of being a good beginning. Anger's Desire (if not always achieved) is to affirm itself against injustice: it surges up against human actions that are in violation of what we deeply feel to be Desirable. So we can say: anger's real Desire is for justice. It is hard to imagine being angry with the weather, or with the colour of one's eyes, or with the mess a baby makes, in any meaningful way. At most we could be irritated or frustrated, but not angry, in these instances. But it is a significant matter to be angry at a speech or action that violates our notion of justice. Anger recognizes the need for judgement, and if it does take the downward course of retribution and vengeance through which ideal speaking is forgotten, then this is subsequent to the strong possibilities that anger opens up. It is anger's degeneration, rather than anger itself, that has to be guarded against.

Anger as such belongs to the realm of possibility. It offers one possibility of commitment, of an alternative to indifference. But as yet this is itself morally indifferent in that it is neither good nor bad: we need a stronger version of (anger as) possibility. Because anger's moral significance lies in its potential, in its desire to achieve justice, in its desire to be significant rather than indifferent, we ask: what is (anger's) potential? The work that anger requires is the work of developing its potential, so that it becomes a principle of regeneration rather than degeneration<sup>1</sup>. We need to do justice to the significance of anger's Desire for what is significant by transforming the possibility it offers into something good: notice

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1. R.Fagles and W.B.Stanford, 1977, p.23.

that this is very different from sublimating anger into something that is aloof from it. The question of the risks and temptations of anger must at the same time be the question of its regenerative potential. The anger towards Kierkegaard that occasioned the negative ironist's speech needs now to be transformed into a force for the regeneration of justice. As we shall see, this requires of anger the work of resolving its own tendency to intemperance.

What does anger give us to transform? We are all familiar with the irresistability of anger, with the way in which we experience it as a force that is always potentially, and sometimes actually, overwhelming. Anger seems liable, at any time, to become self-consuming, obsessional, compulsively oriented to what is worst, and repetitive. It could become monotonous and bore not only alter, but eventually even the angry person himself. All this is to say is that anger has an inescapably physiological character: it is something we experience in, or better, with, our bodies. For Christianity the body is the temple of the sacred, but what is perhaps more vivid for us is that the body could be the carrier of what is most nightmarish. Horror movies are based on this idea that what is closest to us, our own body, could also be the receptacle for what is most alienating or horrible. Indeed, it is the very closeness of the body that provides for its inescapability: if we suffer from disorder of the body, we cannot go anywhere to get away from it. Sickness is horrible, because it is insufferably claustrophobic.

In their discussion of Aeschylus' Oresteian Trilogy, Fagles and Stanford write, of the chain of criminal outrages that the trilogy depicts, "it is as if crime were contagious - and perhaps it is - the dead pursued the living for revenge, and revenge could only breed more

guilt"<sup>2</sup>. The transmission of the curse that lies upon the house of Atreus is carried out through physiology, through the contagion of crime, which turns the lives of its sons into "an inherited disease.... (that) forces them, relentlessly, to commit their fathers' crimes".<sup>3</sup> If anger succumbs to its physiological origin, it breeds a chain of retribution that degenerates inescapably like the degeneration of the sick body: anger becomes trapped in the cycle of corruption, by becoming its agent. Anger's temptation to reciprocate, if acted upon, follows it relentlessly and becomes continually more difficult to cast off. We can imagine this to be the worst part of "the tradition of the dead generations" spoken of by Marx as weighing "like a nightmare on the minds of the living".<sup>4</sup>

Anger begins as a reaction against what is unjust. Even anger that has degenerated into retribution (i.e. anger that has become dominated by the physiological) orients itself against what is undesirable for some notion of the just life. Anger, then, is born out of a vivid experience of injustice. It is the presence of injustice in the world that brings about the birth of anger. Yet anger's problem, as we have seen, is that it is itself somehow prey to injustice. It is liable to sink into a repetitive chain of vengefulness if it does not emerge from the physiological level with which it begins. We would not want simply to stay angry, but somehow to say or do what is necessary to resolve the anger, i.e. to make use of its potential. Even revenge imagines that it is going to resolve the anger that fuels it by killing or hurting its object.

Revenge forgets, however, that retribution makes no movement away from the physiological. Retribution is imprisoned in the physio-

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2. Loc. cit, p.17.

3. Loc. cit, p.17.

4. K.Marx, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, in Marx and Engels, 1968, p.96.



logical because it is not oriented to improvement, either of alter (upon whom it simply wants to inflict suffering), or, more significantly, of itself. It is through an orientation to improvement that anger overcomes its physiological beginnings. It is in this way that it resolves the choice it must make between regeneration and degeneration, in favour of the just life. If anger fails to choose the just life, then it suffers deterioration at the hands of the physiological, it becomes an inescapable disease. Since anger needs something other than the body - namely speech that develops an account - in order to become what it really is, in order to live up to its potential, it needs to resist the temptation posed by its impulse to be self-sufficient, to be all-consuming in its wrath.

## 2. Self-imprisonment and self-development in anger.

If anger, then, is an instance of possibility rather than realization, it needs to avoid the twin extremes of self-love and self-hatred. Neither of these orientations respects anger's potential: instead, both treat anger solely in terms of what (they think) it is. The first problem that has to be resolved in anger's progressive transformation of its physiological beginnings is that of its relationship to injustice. Anger is tempted to imagine that in relation to injustice, anything is justified: hence its tendency to excessive fervour. Anger then repeats injustice. Yet this is challenging since as we have seen, anger is the Desire for justice. Our question is: how is it that the Desire for justice is prone to injustice?

Anger was mythically represented by the Greeks in the shape of the Furies<sup>5</sup>. According to the myth, the Furies sprang to life from the blood of Uranus's genitals when his son Cronos flung them into

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5. In the Oresteian trilogy, Aeschylus portrays their progression from vengeance to helpers of justice.

the sea. So the myth tells us that the parents of anger are violence and potency: the Furies are "the spirits of the avenging dead that can also bring regeneration".<sup>6</sup>

The potency of anger is unintelligible without its violence, its physiological roots: the creativity inherent within it is dependent on the vigour with which it initiates its response to injustice, and this energy necessarily swells up with all the violence of the very injustice it reacts against. Yet anger's creativity is endangered by this same violence, as we have seen. The danger for anger is its engulfment in the quicksand of the physiological. And sheer physiology kills anger's potential. In short, anger's real adversary is sloth (the slothfulness of the body): passivity towards the body turns into physiology merely by default. Anger, then, needs a strong notion of what it is at best, otherwise it becomes its own worst version of itself.

We can consider anger's assertiveness here. Anger strongly wants to say something: it has something to say. Deeply, it is assertive, even if, the anger does not get expressed on a particular occasion. Now asserting the positive is a central issue for this essay, and we recall how it arose in our opening chapter in the context of negative irony. We will deepen Kierkegaard's challenge at this point if we say: what he wants to point out is that negative irony's problem is that it has no notion of assertiveness. Kierkegaard can help us to reconstruct a strong relation to what is Other than speech by reminding us that the denial of assertiveness ("absolute infinite negativity") could only be an abstract relation to Other, a relation that evades saying anything positive, or from developing ways of representing its own value. It is abstract because it is unassertive:

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6. Fagles and Stanford, p.23.

that is, it has no notion of the good of assertiveness.

Anger is crucial to us for our developing account of the positive. We see that assertiveness is essential to anger because the best anger is affirmative. Anger is affirmative when it is (truly) provoked by its idea of alter's failure to speak or act well. Alter's speech fails to show genuine Desire not because of what it affirms but because of what it neglects to affirm: that is, we do not fear it as an unwelcome assertion, but we attempt to turn it towards what it needs (truly to affirm). The best anger is the anger that remembers to grasp positive requirements in the midst of its negation. To do this, it is necessary for it to orient not to alter's action, but through alter's action to the ~~strong~~ interest that action conceals yet requires in order to become just. To say that an action conceals its own requirements from itself is also to say that these requirements remain deeply part of the action: the best anger seeks to return action to its requirements.

This can provide for our (common) sense that only the affirmative speaker can experience a healthy, cathartic, anger, whereas the negative speaker is prone to bitterness, contempt, or arrogance towards his interlocutors. Strongly, one who is angry wants to speak, to speak forward towards resolution. His anger is directed against neglect, failure: against a kind of betrayal of trust - and it is for this reason that only a speaker who trusts can be productively angry. Anger is a demand for trust. This is why analytically anger is so far apart from suspicion, because where anger wants the life of trust (i.e. wants a notion of life as something worth trusting), suspicion is the betrayal of trust (the undermining of any good notion of trust). Anger's own failure, as we shall be developing, would be its forgetting of its

strength (what its demand is for), its loss of its purpose, its dissipation into the suspicion it is opposed to.

Anger could forget that it is the offspring of both violence and potential. Its potential is bound up with its concern, not with the arbitrary violence of chance or circumstance, but with the specific violence of neglect or betrayal. Anger as a strong notion of betrayal is a demand to re-affirm that which is betrayed.

Now if the speaker forgets anger's potency by treating violence conditionally (as a condition to be violently opposed, i.e. to be "remedied" by new conditions) then he becomes limited to being what-he-is at the beginning. As a result, anger comes to hate opposing conditions: it turns into the imposition of conditions (i.e. sheer violence or rage). Instead, the ideal speaker works to keep anger's potential alive, by remembering, in the face of anger's initial surge of emergence, that anger seeks resolution. Its energy is generated out of its unwillingness to acquiesce in the oriented neglect that gave rise to it in the first place. The first thing the theorist must recollect is that the source of anger's energy is its Desire for the re-affirmation of positive requirements. Anger's paradox is that it has its source in its Desire for what is betrayed (or neglected) rather than in its mere rejection of what is present (affirmed). Its violence is moderated by its interest in replenishing what is neglected rather than in reciprocating what is perpetrated.

So anger needs to remember the grounds on which its judgemental character rests. That anger is judgemental is only possible given that, deeply, it is a desire for the affirmative. Anger is the desire for the good of trust in the face of its betrayal or neglect.

It is commonly said that anger is either heated, or, more ominously, cold. Heated anger is taken to be a true expression of what anger is. Now we can develop this notion by noting that the heat of anger is more genuine because it resonates with a notion of warmth. Sheer heat (the violence of adverse circumstance) would burn us up: we would be consumed by it. Yet the warmth that allows anger to be heated rather than cold is friendly: it is the sheer violence of physiology transformed into the force of the strong speaker's interest. Anger, we can say, echoing Socrates, is a human sort of violence: the human potential for tempering violence not through reciprocal violence, but through the expression and force of Desire. We must give anger its just place, because the ideal speaker cannot merely ignore violence (for this would be metaphysical), nor reciprocate it (for this would be bestial or murderous). Anger is passionate because it shows us that ideally, man (the speaker) is the one who mediates violence.

Anger, then, is an expression of our need to mediate violence<sup>7</sup>. If anger orients to what alter does (rather than, through what alter does, towards what alter neglects), it degenerates into violence or hatred of alter (as a condition or circumstance). Anger forgets its own difference from violence. Anger is other than the gratuitous violence that is circumstance or the oriented neglect (betrayal) that is injustice. Anger's principle (passion) is other than the occasions which call it forth as an activity. The ideal speaker develops anger as something that can become authoritative.

Anger that hates alter - rage or self-indulgent anger - kills what is best about anger (its potency) by identifying with only one of its parents, violence. It remembers the violence but not the potential

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7. Later, we will formulate the violence of anger as a particular mediation. See Section Five below.

of its birth. The violence of anger's birth carries the risk that, at the moment of its birth, it will be consumed by the apparent omnipresence of violence. That is: it could forget its own potential for authority. Self-indulgence is one consequence of the failure to accept the need to re-integrate the potential and the force of anger. Anger's force becomes merely physiological, merely unjust. Anger's potential grounds its judgemental character: it begins with the strong desire, not simply to make a judgement on the betrayal that forced its birth upon it, but, more deeply, to actually make affirmation of what has been neglected. Anger wants to affirm some notion of our deep need. When anger equates itself with violence, it turns into rage. Rage kills the potential of anger's judgement: rage merely judges speakers in a repetitive way, for it cannot move beyond its initial identification of itself as a thing that is "just-so", with these particular attributes. Rage is a degeneration of anger: it is a failure to treat anger's beginning dialectically. It is restricted to the eternal repetition of its beginning, rather than developing its beginning towards resolution.

At the other extreme, if anger forgets force by treating potential abstractly (i.e. if it starts seeking to abrogate or cancel violence altogether), the power of anger's potential is lost. Potency is turned into abstract possibility (the absence of violence). Heraclitus addresses this problem when he says:

"Homer was wrong in saying "would that strife might perish from amongst gods and men". For if that were to occur, then all things would cease to exist". 8

Heraclitus is reminding us here of our need for a strong notion of strife as passion. Nothing would exist - no difference would be possible, no relation

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8. Heraclitus, Fragment 27, in P.Wheelwright, 1959, p.29.

between same and other could exist - without strife. Heraclitus counsels us to locate ourselves inside rather than outside strife, in striving rather than in laziness or abstraction.

The ideal speaker is oriented positively towards the force or power of his interest. He is powerfully gripped within the life of re-constructing his relation to language. That is, he does not simply fear or repudiate power on the basis that "power corrupts". Power is corrupt when it is ungrounded, when it references only what it happens to be as an unregulated quantity of energy. So the ideal speaker seeks to restore power to its grounds, that is, to provide for what is truly authoritative.

Anger references our need to place violence, to transform it rather than to repeat it . Yet anger's violence is needed in order to place the speaker as one who mediates violence (who turns violence into passion). To mediate violence is to sustain one's desire for conversation as the re-achievement of our place between mere violence (conditions) on the one hand, and complacent indifference on the other. Our place is mediated violence (the force of justice): the ideal speaker is the one who neither treats violence in a conditional way nor avoids taking the risk of mediating violence. If the first of these alternatives references rage or self-indulgent anger, the second resonates with abstractness, resistance to living in the world of usage, conditions, and circumstance.

Abstract or remorseful anger holds itself away from the world for fear that the world could turn one into a lotus-eater who forgets his home. In this version of the story, the lotus-eater is the one who forgets his origin or source. The speaker's problem is seen as



his need to remember where he came from by aiming to return to it in the midst of anything other than this source. The speaker, in this account, has to avoid interacting in a lively way with what is other than his source, or listening to the seductive world of variability. Instead this speaker (mathematical anger, anger against the particular) to the extent that he feels himself "compelled" to live in the mundane world, uses convention as his merely abstract mediation with life or Desire. What is most lively is the Desire that grounds interaction as the strong and sustained relation between particulars; yet interaction grounded in Desire always needs a positive relation to convention. Convention is different from (yet required by) Desire. Now the remorseful speaker orients exclusively to the difference. He treats the difference between convention and life as his means of avoidance. Now we can take up again and develop our notion of the negative ironist. Since convention is not something towards which the remorseful speaker has a positive relation, but is merely treated as a way of keeping the world at arm's length, his relation to it is one of negative irony. He is ironic towards convention in that he accepts a need for it while having reserve towards it, yet he is negative in that his relation to it is constructed for the sake of avoidance, disdain, or the preservation of an abstract notion of origin as Other.

For the ideal speaker the lotus-eater is, indeed, one who has forgotten everything but the particular pleasures he happens to find. The lotus-eater is the one who is arbitrary, who knows no value beyond chance pleasure: he mirrors the arbitrariness of conditions. Yet if this is the risk of all interaction, the ideal speaker seeks to avoid, not the risk, but instead the deadly avoidance itself that is abstract (remorseful, patriarchal) anger. The ideal speaker does not fear the

loss of his source, but rather the failure to make something good of our relation to our source. He constructs rather than turns back<sup>9</sup>. He is resourceful in his relation to source (language) rather than immobile in wanting to stay at the source.

In his relation to convention, the ideal speaker seeks to be positively ironic. Convention is accidental in that it could be otherwise: yet it is constructed accident (as distinct from the randomness of the weather). That is to say, convention has to be (it would be impossible to imagine otherwise) something more than mere accident in that it references and expresses a constructive relationship between the ideal and the circumstantial. Not to be ironic towards convention is to treat what is constructed as if it were essential: yet not to be positive towards it is to forget that life is a construction, that is, the construction of a positive relation to what limits us. Positive irony is the motion from the accident of birth or circumstance to the constructive movement of the oriented life. Hence it is a movement, not towards the origin (as if we sought to be original) but within a resourcefulness or constructiveness towards language as the source of value. Motion is not teleological, but is our way of making another difference through which we continuously re-vivify the same telos, i.e. the difference between the conditional and the valuable.

Language is Other than speech in that whereas speech could always be otherwise, i.e. it is constructed, hence conventional, language (the ground, the Idea) could not be otherwise than What It Is; it is the same as itself. Speech's potential is to be unlike the

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9. In mythology, those who turn back (towards where they have come from) suffer the punishment of immobilization; viz. Orpheus, or Lot's wife.

things that are indifferent to value (i.e. conditions) yet it is like these insofar as it could be this or that. So speech can never encapsulate or embody language since language is always itself (it could not be merely "this or that"). Yet language needs speech to re-collect its value. What the ideal speaker seeks to limit his speech by is speech's need for language, i.e. the worthlessness of speech without language - and language's need for speech i.e. the abstractness of language without speech. That is, he wants to strive for the representation in speech of what is valuable.

Anger towards manyness, the "this or that" of the world of becoming, the polis, is a form of misplacement. It is a misplacement of violence in that it has forgotten that anger needs violence for good reason, not for bad. Anger need not fear its own violence, hold back from speaking, censor and restrain itself, because its deep desire is to do good and to enforce the good on alter. To enforce the good on one's interlocutor is not to tyrannize him into doing things against his will, but to have (develop) the force one needs to really convince him of what is desirable.

Mathematical anger treats abstract potential (the desire to coincide with one's source) as the good speech. Like its opposite, remorseful anger forgets one of its parents. It remembers our recommendation earlier, that anger has to heed how it is other than mere violence: yet it treats this as a sufficient mandate for what it is. Abstract anger sees its potential as a possession to be celebrated - as, for example, talent is tempted to see itself. It forgets that the potential of anger for being creative (being significant, making a difference) lies in the possibility of transforming mere force (injustice) into reasonable force (justice): that is, in its potential

for re-integrating passion and reason.

Self-recrimination is blinded by fear of its own guilt. It is constantly pained by its sense of guilt because of its notion of original sin: it understands its very birth as irretrievably bound up with the guilt of its traffic with violence, its having been generated out of accident. Its desire to re-unite with the origin is a desire to live in a state prior to birth, a preference for innocence or purity over life.

Remorse treats man's relationship to what could not be otherwise as if it incriminated him. What could not be otherwise for man is that he has a body ( his life is mixed with accident): while the ideal speaker treats this as a beginning requiring the work of collecting, and resisting the possible dispersion of man through his body, remorse treats it as a sin in need of redemption.

Where remorse is cosmopolitan in that it could equally be anywhere, rage is parochial in its attachment to its own particular place. Remorse ( as a modern phenomenon) has to do with a prevailing sense of rootlessness, whereas rage is ancient and is related to a strong identification with the familiar.<sup>10</sup> Both of these versions of anger fail because they treat the problem of anger as merely interactional. Rage "succeeds" in defending its place by turning its anger outwards and being destructive of alter. Remorse "fails" to assuage its guilt, because it turns its anger inwards and becomes self-destructive. Both treat anger mechanically, so it be-

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10. Revolution is more difficult to make in the more developed (universalist) countries, because the popular rage based on strong solidarity that is possible in places with a sense of locale is difficult to sustain given the defeat of place. Inasmuch as revolution requires a quantum of rage to fuel it, the notion of universal revolution has inherent difficulties, given the relation we have theorized between rage and particularity.

comes a means to destruction. They want mere interaction, exchange, outcome, to tell them what they are: yet they never resolve decisively the question of what they are, since, in either version of what anger is (violence or abstraction, identity with or difference from multis), there is no possibility for movement. Neither has any notion of being lively with potential. This accounts for their urge to be completely clear interactionally, to have straightforward judgements on everybody. Remorse, at its extremity, secretly hates everybody by hating (rejecting) itself: rage openly hates everybody by loving (merely insisting upon) itself. Remorse and rage refuse to live with the mixed character of interaction ( or with the mixture within the soul): remorse by retreating from the mixed, rage by submerging itself within it.

If anger is to resist the temptation of mere interaction, then it has to remember both its educability (which self-indulgence forgets) and its need for the passion to learn (which self-recrimination forgets). Anger needs to make generous affirmation of what is troublesome, the mixture of potential and violence<sup>11</sup>. It has to accept the mixture that it is, as its way of living with the mixture that interaction is: for only this acceptance can lead to resolution. Now we can understand in what sense anger belongs to the ideal speaker's life within the mixture of justice and injustice. Anger exemplifies the passion of the ideal speaker's response to his encounter with injustice: it references the strength of his Desire for justice. Beyond this, we must provide for anger's place within the soul and its order<sup>12</sup>. Anger has to resist the impulse to dominate the soul, to usurp the place of reason, so that instead it can temper the soul. Anger can become a

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11. Stanley Raffel, in his book Matters of Fact, 1979, has a lively notion of trouble, see p.69.

12. As developed by Plato in the Republic.

temperate part of the soul by re-achieving the integration of its own origins (its generativity and its force). By answering to the requirement placed upon it, anger itself becomes a required part of the theorist's work of integrating his soul.

So anger's potential as a re-generative force is required to live up to its ideal. Anger provides a passion for good speech, yet what does passion need in order to be itself an example of good speech? The challenge for anger's passion is to remember in the midst of the physiological, that it is a passion for the good. The work anger needs to do in re-integrating its origin allows it to be a required part of good speech, yet anger itself is not the origin of speech. While anger fuels the demand for justice, it also requires the decisive mediation of the ideal speaker in order to fulfil this potential. So we are not interested in describing the "history" of the ideal speaker or the story of his "emergence" from some "pre-ideal" state. A risk for our thinking on anger would be to consider it as a kind of therapy, generating through its cathartic effect a speaker who is freed from repressions, a speaker who is not hampered by inhibition and can therefore supposedly "know what he really wants". While this notion can remind us of the need for the affirmative - the what that it seeks to affirm is simply the ego and its feelings. It treats feelings as the origin, so that enacting one's feelings is a direct relation to (and recovery of) what is original<sup>13</sup>. Yet the ideal speaker needs to engage in the work of inquiring into what is truly desirable as that which is worth wanting. What the ideal speaker really wants is (to inquire into) what is truly good.

Anger then is not a "stage" through which the partiality or error of an earlier time synthesizes itself into the completeness or secure

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13. As such, the "therapy of anger" is an instance of the usage of awe, to be discussed in Chapter 5.



truth of the ideal speaker. Anger is not a purgatorial fire on a road to self-completion: instead we have to use our commitment to the ideal speaker in order to mediate anger well. This mediating relation is represented mythically for us by Aeschylus when he deals with the problem of Orestes' accountability for the murder of his mother, Clytemnestra. Orestes is being pursued from place to place by the vengeful Furies who are driving him insane. Yet there is justice mixed up with the horror of matricide in his deed: clearly, since the Furies are bent on vengeance they are unqualified to make judgement on Orestes. The Furies represent rage or matriarchal excess. Aeschylus introduces Athena, the goddess of wisdom and government, as one capable of conducting the inquiry<sup>14</sup>. Our problem is to construct a notion of Athena's part in the story, not as an external intervention, but as a recovery of what is worthiest in anger. Our work is to re-habilitate Fury (as well as, on the other side, to re-fortify Remorse).

Another way of putting the problem is to recall again how our situation is akin to that of Socrates in the face of Meno's challenge.<sup>15</sup> Socrates could be tempted to think that he needs the intervention of the gods in order to help him here. Instead, Socrates portrays man's relation to language (the gods) as one that requires man's own intervention. In telling the story, Socrates practises the intervention that is needed - i.e. convincing Meno not to give up in the face of difficulty. Socrates regenerates the question by showing that what it asks for is not a pure origin/beginning ("how will you know"), but an account of the decisiveness of its relation to what is essential to it. The relation between anger and ideal speaking needs to be resolved as the question of anger's decisiveness.

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14. Aeschylus, *The Eumenides*, in 1977, p.248.

15. As discussed in the Introduction.



### 3. Anger as an instance of speech.

Our task here will be satisfied by addressing ourselves to the problem of anger's relationship to speech. We take the outcome of anger's struggle to find its resolution to depend on its establishing its proper relationship to speech, that is, a relationship that defers to the possibility of the ideal speaker's emergence. The ideal speaker, in our re-construction of him, is the one who continually justifies his speech (speaks justly) by making available within it the question of its end or value. The aim of just speech is to re-integrate us with language by showing, not only the rule of language, but how the supremacy of language is good for man (for speakers). Anger, then, is a challenge because it is tempted to forget itself and thus forget its end or value. Since anger's value is its demand for the integration of force and potential as what is valuable, its value falls into abuse when force and potential are segregated. Anger's need for the work of the ideal speaker (to sustain a strong notion of its value, of what anger deeply is) is internal to it. Anger is another instance of the need to re-achieve the integration of speech with what makes it valuable, and as such, does not stand "outside" the ideal speaker's experience of language as a "mere emotion" needing to be cleared before real work begins. The fear of anger upon which this externalization is premised is not the principle of our work. That is, the fear of anger per se is misplaced, since it is anger's temptation to excess that is to be feared. Aeschylus again provides the image of what our conversation with anger is oriented to achieve: our fear of the Furies (vengeful anger) becomes a celebration of justice, in which the Eumenides (the transformed Furies) themselves participate.

What, then, is anger's ideal relation to speech? The twin excesses of self-indulgence and self-recrimination will help us here. We can begin by recalling that in both instances what is obsessional about them comes from their respective relationships with their origin. In each case, memory is partial: sheer immersion in, or abstraction from, the violence of its origin is predicated on a forgetfulness of the mixed character of that origin. Anger's problem is the problem of memory. With rage, this develops into the notion that alter (injustice) needs to be remedied by mechanical feats of memory. Rage's repetitive character is a feature of its treatment of each new instance of injustice as the mere forgetting of what it said to the offender last time. Rather than educate its alter, rage merely wants to impose a mnemonic upon it, to imprint itself as if alter was only a wax tablet. Rage is staunchly empirical. It has an imposing stance towards its interlocutor, generated by its rigid self-differentiation from him: hence it is unable to do anything but shout and scream at what it sees as the disorientedness of alter. Rage is only able to differentiate: that is, it is unable to formulate the oriented character of its interlocutor and to raise the question for its alter of the genuine requirement that his speech conceals. Rage is uninterested in conversing because, given its love of self (where self means the particular, that with which it identifies) it treats as injustice whatever threatens the intactness of its relations. Rage reacts against an enduring but concretized sense of betrayal: it wants loyalty to its own exigency rather than to the demand for justice. It subjects justice (as we have already seen) to the rule of interaction. Instead of orienting to a strong notion of the betrayal of trust or the neglect of what is valuable, rage is consumed by the interactional. It reacts (i.e. it is reactive)

to its personal hurt (the betrayal of its own exigency) above any betrayal of principle. Because of rage's failed memory (its failure to remember how it is that particularity is desirable) it imposes itself on alter through harangue rather than conversation. It treats alter as needing to be supplied with an experience to remember, the experience of this concrete "good life" with which alter is unfamiliar through whatever accident of birth or upbringing. Rage wants the imposition of norms upon speakers.

Self-indulgent anger, being merely interactional, equates interlocutors with injustice. Instead of trying to recover what it is that their speech has forgotten, self-indulgence only remembers what is worst about alters - because it treats what is "best" about itself, its concrete difference, as something to be mechanically remembered. Here we can formulate rage's commitment to a literal reading of alter as grounded in its desire to assemble what is worst. Rage remembers speeches or actions as concrete, particularized, betrayals: sheer speech, rather than the re-construction of its educability, becomes paramount. Rage has an empiricist notion of experience as an imprint upon a tabula rasa. It practises the "art of memory"<sup>16</sup>, sets out to notice all the weaknesses of alter's speech, where these weaknesses are technical features of the speech itself: its inconsistencies, its failures to do full explication. Such features are taken as signs of its unwarrantability: rage (e.g. jealousy) is always ready to hear omission - i.e. the omission of completion - in alter's talk. Rage wants literal completeness. It is always imagining that the worst thing (the thing it seeks to remember) is deliberately omitted. It hears vagueness or shorthand references as terrible betrayals: it

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16. See .F.Yates, 1969, for an account of mnemonic techniques.

cannot live with the essential incompleteness of description, and tries to blame alter by attributing it to him.

Because rage is forgetful of anything but concrete difference, it is committed to sheer speech or interaction. But since it lacks any strong notion of what authorizes it, it can only sputter aphoristically and disjointedly. Rage doesn't convince - hence it has to merely repeat itself - because it has no real conviction. That is, its version of conviction denies conversation, and so it denies itself the possibility of finding its conviction. Rage constructs itself on sheer difference, sheer birthright as a warrior's notion of self-affirmation.

At the opposite extreme, self-recrimination, because it forgets its force, elects not to speak. Self-recrimination does not speak (affirm or assert). It does not recognize anger's need to speak, but instead seeks to silence the body. Its notion of its own difference from its source compels it to think of itself as burdened with its own past-as-guilt: we can recall here notions of tradition as a heavy weight that restricts us by rendering our spontaneity merely apparent. Remorse, through its inhibition of speech, pre-empts the development of an experience of responsible speech as a task that essentially needs to be borne lightly. Remorse constructs itself on sheer identity, sheer negativity towards the self, as a narcissistic desire for the origin.

In its relations with alter, remorse is austere in its failure to exemplify a genuinely inviting alternative speech. It provides only a Name, the Name of self-transcendence, as the sheer Other to what it is. Remorse becomes self-consuming because it is continually being

exasperated by the unwillingness of the polis to treat the Name of what is Other as anything more than a new phenomenon. (Multis, as the concern with accident or chance effect, reacts only with outrage when it is told simply to be "other than multis").

Anger needs neither sheer speech (self-love) nor silence (self-hatred), but rather the development of speech as the gaining of conviction for oneself: only in this way can it be transformed into justice. What is it for anger to gain conviction - and thus to contribute to the genesis of justice - in the face of mixture? Anger has to avoid both the degeneration into mere violence and the abstraction into mere potential. If the good of anger is its strength as a demand for justice, then its task is to fuel its own potential (to enforce its own good). Anger has to work towards integrating its possibly divergent origins rather than having to choose between them. We can begin to formulate this desire for integration by recalling anger's characteristic urgency, its dynamism, its insistence on satisfaction. Anger's need is to gain true satisfaction. Its concern is with (its) truth, that is, in giving a forceful reason, giving an account of itself. Anger without reason orients to destruction. Anger that gives a reason doesn't deny itself (i.e. it gains satisfaction), nor does it merely repeat itself (i.e. it gains genuine rather than destructive satisfaction).

The gaining of conviction or satisfaction enables anger to develop the strong sense of itself that is its essential requirement. Without this sense, anger becomes merely unjust. Anger becomes the victim of an ironic reversal as its demand for justice turns into its opposite. In order to respond justly to injustice, anger needs conviction or satisfaction. That is, anger must be temperate. It must

develop temperance rather than self-love or self-hatred. Temperance is the satisfaction or conviction we are enabled to achieve through our mastery of the physiological.

As an example of anger's need for satisfaction, consider the anger of a parent at a child who is being very destructive or selfish. The parent wants neither the child to be destructive, nor to be destructive of the child. Constructive anger does not wage war with the child. Instead it tries to make the child strong enough to understand the difference between temperance and intemperance. Above all, the anger of the parent has to invite the child to resolve the problem of anger for himself. Punishment of a child needs to be passionate, not detached or calculated, occurring after the heat of the anger has evaporated. Calculative punishment is a mechanical juxtaposition of rationality and passion (punishment): it does not achieve any binding togetherness or true integration of the two. Both of the elements have already, in isolation from each other, become mutually incompatible: so the mere placing of the two together again, not only fails to re-integrate them, but produces a monstrous hybrid instead. The child who is subject to calculative punishment will experience an anger against it that, in the overpowering context of calculativeness, will be unable to resolve itself. The child will become a remorseful speaker, with a destructive relation towards his own particularity. In the beginnings of remorse, we see its character as a kind of intemperance. Instead of conviction or satisfaction (i.e. a positive relation to the physiological), remorse seeks merely to negate the physiological. If temperance is the positively ironic relation to nature then remorse is an instance of intemperance. Remorse fails to achieve its concealed Desire for justice because it is intemperate.

On the other hand, while punishment needs to be passionate, i.e. immediate, sheer punishment is as bad as its opposite (calculative punishment). Sheer punishment is like retribution in that it lacks a reason, it cannot distinguish between just and unjust violence. Sheer punishment (the rage of the parent) could become simply another part of family life, i.e. something familiar. If remorse is a protest against the familiar, an instance of the Germanic and Protestant intellect, the consequence of a calculative parent's Garfinkelian experiment within the home, rage is a desire for sheer familiarization, a manic protest against anything other than the familiar. The calculative parent thinks that the home should be a school, that everything, especially oneself, needs to be objectified: the enraged parent rebels against whatever threatens to de-familiarize his experience, namely indirectness, giving reasons, school. Thus rage is another kind of intemperance. Rage does not mediate the physiological, but instead subjects itself to it. It is intemperate to treat the body as the ruler of the soul. It is because of this kind of intemperance that rage, like remorse, fails to achieve its concealed Desire for justice.

These responses to the problem of anger are grounded as possibilities in the nature of anger as violence and potential mixed. Self-recrimination wants posterity to rigidly answer to its notion of the pure beginning: it is oriented to the Family Line, i.e. it is patriarchal, all-objectifying by the standard of a securely held criterion or title-deed. Remorse neurotically estranges familiarity. By contrast, rage is a speaker's vehement protest when his immersion in what he loves reveals its insufficiency, by being subjected to question from outside itself. Rage is the rebellion against any other example of the desirable than "this one here": it is matriarchal, oriented to



the Extended Family (inclusiveness-exclusiveness) without any real principle of unity (authority). The enraged family indulges its desire for sheer familiarization by ignoring how its very anger (deeply) is evidence to the unfamiliar, the not-presently-at-hand, the demanding. Instead of acknowledging its place in the Whole by working with anger's demand, the enraged family will abound in recriminations because of its expectation that the family be self-explicating.

Instead, anger must remember that it already references more than the family. The anger of the parent is always in need of, and a demand for, an account. The resolution of anger is its satisfaction of its demand to re-achieve our confidence in the capacity of speech or the mind. Both rage and remorse are failures of this confidence, whereas resolved anger has confided in the capacity of speech or the mind to re-achieve a strong relation with language, and has given to speech the passion to do so. The parent achieves satisfaction by recognizing, not only the child's need for satisfaction, but also, more deeply, that both parent's and child's satisfaction are grounded in the interdependence rather than the segregation of punishment and the giving of reasons. Remorse abuses punishment by seeking to rationalize it (as if punishment could be its own reason). Rage abuses reason by ignoring it (as if punishment did not need a reason). In order to actualize its Desire (for justice), anger must become temperate.

#### 4. Anger and the interest in theorizing.

Anger's risk (its failure to live up to what it needs to be) is that it could become exegetical, passive, oriented to literal readings. The commitment to exegesis pre-empts the possibility of self's or alter's improvement: anger forgets its essential educability. Both remorse and rage identify anger as a certain fixed relation to the world of

"convention" - either a rejection of or an immersion in this world - and given this beginning, they both have a technical, literal, interest in deciphering this world. Remorse feels the weight of its history (its tradition) bear down upon it, and engages in a Sisyphean-like enterprise of explicating it in the hope of learning something. Its notion of learning is expiatory: it becomes entangled in the work of discounting and unravelling the weave of historical distance between itself (the present) and its interlocutor (the past). Remorse's essentially nostalgic work is the never-ending removal of impediments which continually spring up again to obstruct the pure apprehension of an original intention. Remorse rejects familiarity (the non-original) as what is undesirably present in every appearance and treats all utterances ("would-be knowledge") as surrounded in a veil of historically-determined and obstructive familiarities<sup>17</sup>.

Self-indulgent anger also has an interest in literalness in that it wants to establish beyond doubt the absolute injustice of its object, as evidence to its own absolute justice. It wants to pin alter down, to place a mark upon him by which he will be instantly recognizable. Because it is continually suspicious of alter's speech, hearing it as evasive, or deceptive, rage suffers problems concerning its use of the documentary method. Recall Garfinkel's discussion of this interpretive method which he says, citing Mannheim, "involves the search for ".....an identical homologous pattern underlying a vast variety of totally different realizations of meaning" "<sup>18</sup>. The use of the documentary method, Garfinkel wants to show, is dependent on "common sense

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17. Tristram Shandy is a story of this problem. Tristram's problem was hopeless in that, because it took him a full day to write up an account of a half-day of his life, it would be impossible for him ever to finish his autobiography. Indeed, even if he worked hard at his task, the longer he lived, the further he would be from the achievement of it.

18. H.Garfinkel, 1967, p.78.

knowledge of social structures": elsewhere he speaks of trust<sup>19</sup>. For example, Garfinkel comments that

"correct correspondence (between a reported observation and the intended occurrence it is meant to report on) is the product of the work of investigator and reader as members of a community of co-believers". 20

The problem for the enraged speaker is his repudiation of membership of such a community, and his simultaneous desire to treat utterances as pointers to certain truth. Rage is deprived of the shared belief that allows one, through the use of the method, to recognize "what a person is "talking about" given that he does not say exactly what he means".<sup>21</sup> Whereas the "community of co-believers" is not compelled to be painstakingly literal because it makes use, in an easygoing way, of the documentary method, rage becomes obsessive about documentation in the strict sense. It is constantly adducing, going behind what is being said, and at the same time blaming the speaker or even speech itself for the absence of complete revelation. It construes the necessary indirectness of speech as an oriented omission on the part of the (unjust) speaker, generated out of the latter's desire to hide what he is "talking about" (to hide his injustice). Rage treats alter as being responsible for its own compulsory need to detect, to document, to decipher. It sees its alter (injustice) as motivating the indirectness of speech: its notion of literalness leads it to its abiding concern with signs, traces, material evidence. Rage finds in every story the same tell-tale residues of the criminal who has tried to slip away unnoticed: every speech is potentially treatable as a gloss on its own conditions of existence, its illusions, its injustice. Ultimately, self-indulgent anger treats speech itself as unjust, because of its indirectness. It finds that

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19. H.Garfinkel, "A Conception of and Experiments with "Trust" as a Condition of Stable Concerted Actions" in: O.J.Harvey, ed, 1963.

20. Garfinkel, 1967, p.96.

21. Loc. cit, p.78.

it cannot say directly what it wants to say, it cannot speak literally, but instead can only gesticulate: and blames the inadequacy of speech. Rage wants speech to be direct, literal, perfectly transparent or familiar. It is angry at speech itself: it mistrusts speech because it is not pliable to its sheer violence. Thus, rage is forever fuelling itself, and is forever provided with fuel for its fire, because even with the greatest effort in the world (which would be utterly misplaced) it would be impossible for speech to amount to a mere self-revelation, a familiarization of its matter. Rage wants speech to be material rather than ideal: it lives in an energetically vengeful relation with speech because of its "failure" to be so.

Self-indulgent anger, unmediated outrage, is contagious: it boomerangs on us like a family curse (the curse of family autocracy, the rule of the familiar). The curse is re-activated, as portrayed in the story of Atreus, by each new generation. We take this to represent the notion that rage or sheer generativity can only re-activate and augment what is cursed. Mere re-activation is a curse. This repetitiveness comes about because of the merely physiological character of rage. Rage does not gain the true satisfaction or conviction of speech, but only the temporary "satiation" of exhaustion. Sheer physiology is insatiable; it collapses temporarily from its exertions, but inevitably rises up again. The ideal of Atreus is to act directly on its anger: rage is attracted by the idea of externalization, free expression<sup>22</sup>. It forgets that crimes, revengeful actions, are contagious: it thinks "acting out" is an end to the matter, forgetting that this merely remains at the level of the physiological (i.e. it is not oriented to improvement). Because rage does not gain true satisfaction, it remains essentially dissatisfied, since it remains trapped by the profligacy

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22. Fagles and Stanford, 1977.

of the physiological. Rage is profligate (i.e. it mirrors the multitudinousness of conditions) because it has no principle other than what is familiar.

If remorse represses and segregates, rage reacts against this by its sheer externalization, its desire to destroy all "barriers" to directness, even speech itself if necessary. Neither of the two recognize the commitment of the ideal speaker to distinction shown, for example, in the distinction he draws between punishment and reason. The ideal speaker's speech is distinguished by its work, i.e. by its activity of making more out of the beginning (anger, or the child) - by giving an account. The ideal speaker wants neither to reject physiology (like remorse) nor to insist solely on what is familiar (like rage) but to show the work of preserving a strong relation with conditions. The theorist accepts the body because he knows he can make it serve his purposes: the very engagement with the physiological (e.g. anger's violence) is another occasion on which to become oriented, to re-achieve his purposes.

Anger's true satisfaction is to work, i.e. to develop distinction. For anger, the distinction (needing work is that) between anger (as the demand for justice) and justice (as what the demand is for). Anger needs the work of irony towards physiology as answering to its need for mediation: through temperance, anger becomes capable of re-achieving its distinction. Ironical or strong anger (the anger that is mediated by the ideal speaker's interest) offers praise in the midst of its anger, makes generous jokes, seeks to move and engage alter: in this way, it becomes "something more", i.e. more than interactional or exegetic. It becomes just.

Socrates frequently speaks to his interlocutor as if he were talking about some reproachable "third man", when really he is formulating the hearer himself. In this way Socrates invites his alter to orient, not to the derivative question of who he is, but to the strong question of what man is. Socrates resists the belaboured or taxing identification of speakers when such a transfixing (exegesis) would imprison them in their empirical selves and prevent them from making more of their beginnings. Socrates' irony is not his "deception" of interlocutors, but his interest in turning speaker's interests towards genuine requirements (rather than in merely naming speakers). Socrates re-affirms the need to be interested in strong requirements, rather than, as rage or remorse insist, in self-identification. Socrates always speaks with his interlocutor about the issue of principle raised by the putative "third man". Even if the interlocutor begins to suspect who Socrates is talking about, he need not take offence or become defensive because he has seen also that Socrates' interest is not in labelling. What Socrates is interested in is the distinction between anger and justice. The mere demand for justice (anger) is not necessarily just unless it has been tempered ironically. Anger involves our relation to physiology or nature. What anger requires in order to achieve its end (justice) is: to become temperate.

##### 5. Mastering anger through irony

If irony is the work of mediating anger's violence, we need also to show that it is the work of developing anger's potential. Anger's potential strength is that it provides the ideal speaker with an occasion to re-collect his interest. Anger is the beginning through which, and from out of which, the theorist re-achieves his interest in justice as the difference between the authoritative force of ideal speech and the



arbitrary violence of speech that disowns its authored character (disowns the need to recover its end or value). Anger's potential (and the work of developing it) is a required part of the theorist's life. What is it, then, that the ideal speaker re-collects through his engagement with anger? Even to ask this question is itself, as we shall see, an achievement. The ideal speaker remembers that distinction cannot be achieved by segregating anger. The failure to develop distinction (e.g. the possibility of strong anger, the distinction between anger and what anger demands )generates segregated speech. The notion of segregation will not be properly grounded until Chapter Four; we can anticipate here by saying that both remorse and rage segregate speech from what it needs. At this point we are able to see how the question of what the ideal speaker re-collects through his work with anger is itself an achievement. To have segregated anger (as remorse does by merely abstracting from it, and as rage does by violating it) would have forbidden that the question "what is re-collected by meeting anger's challenge?" be taken seriously at all. Through the work of developing distinction (engaging anger), the ideal speaker re-collects and deepens the difference between distinction and segregation. The interest of irony is in distinction (working with beginnings) rather than segregation (interaction).

If it is to irony that we entrust the task of mediating anger's forceful potential, this is because anger is ironic (invites the work of irony): anger has something to contribute, but doesn't yet know what it is. The mixed feelings towards anger that might tempt the angry speaker to self-recrimination can now be more strongly formulated as the need to be ironic with anger: neither simply accepting it on its own terms, nor rejecting it on some other terms. The "terms" under



which anger is to be evaluated (rather than merely accepted or rejected) include the very anger itself, yet it is anger mastered, improved, and in place. Kierkegaard, we recall, spoke of the need to master irony, to place it within the whole. We can begin to respect his Desire by working on the idea of mastery. Kierkegaard wants a notion of discipline that is "cherished"<sup>23</sup> by those who know it. Instead of being accusatory towards Kierkegaard, identifying his attributes, forcing him to stick like glue to the failed outcomes of his efforts to generate these notions, we can imaginatively invite him (or an alter in his place) to re-achieve the decisive questions that can re-open the outcome. Instead of taking Kierkegaard's version of Socrates as face-value documentary evidence of his underlying injustice, we can ironize our anger towards him by using it as an occasion to recover the question of what his desire needs. We can use Kierkegaard to re-collect ourselves, by asking, what is his commitment to language such that he can generate the version of Socrates that he does? Rather than allowing ourselves, as Adeimantos likely would, to be persuaded by his version of Socrates, and then reverse the evaluation of it, as if his "version" was correct and his "evaluation" incorrect, we can instead respect the desire to speak ideally in every instance by asking what it is that is required in order to achieve a just version and a just evaluation that belong together. What is required is a strong notion of mastery as the discipline that is loved for its own sake.

Kierkegaard, we recall, saw Socratic irony as self-consuming, attempting to devour itself in its own negativity. If it were, we could agree willingly with him in saying that it needs to be mastered.

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23. Kierkegaard, p.339.

However, through our engagement with anger, we can now say that Kierkegaard mistakes anger for irony: it is sheer anger (rage, self-indulgence) that is self-consuming, it is anger that runs the risk of being asocial, capricious, purely individualistic. It is anger that needs to be mastered through irony. We can make Kierkegaard stronger, make more of his suggestion, by saying that irony needs to have mastery: for example, it needs to master (mediate) anger. This simultaneously transforms Kierkegaard's notions of both mastery and irony. Mastered anger is not sublimated anger, "reduced to a moment"<sup>24</sup>, lacking all passion. The ideal speaker, rather than repressing anger, masters it ironically, uses it as a lively occasion for speech, so as to treat his mastery not as what he needs (i.e. sheer talent or inventiveness) but as his way of showing or respecting what he needs. The ideal speaker, unlike the warrior (rage) or the narcissist (remorse), treats his mastery of the physiological indirectly: that is, he treats it as the outcome of his desire for ideal speaking rather than as the origin of value. The warrior acts on his mastery of the body in order to master others (i.e. he treats the body as decisive, in need of merely direct speech): the narcissist ruminates on his mastery of the mind in order to avoid others (i.e. he treats the Logos as if it were decisive, in need of merely disembodied speech). They both treat mastery as the origin of value. Instead, the ideal speaker recognizes that his mastery (irony) is not the source of value, but that its real source is language which grants his mastery as his way of showing his desire to sustain his need. The ideal speaker recognizes his need as the need for language: his irony (his mastery of the physiological) is his recognition of the necessarily indirect, occasioned, character of speech as the showing of need. Irony is the ideal speaker's rejec-

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24. Kierkegaard, p.337.

tion of the temptation towards sheer direct speech (treating speech as the body, as matter) or alternatively towards obscurely complicated and tortuous speech (treating speech as the Logos, as form). The ideal speaker treats the indirectness of speech (its always partial transparency, its need for a method or style) not as a flaw to be overcome but as essential to it. Speech's relation to the inessential is strongly instanced through anger. If speech were merely inessential, anger would always proliferate into self-differentiation, violence, rage: if it were completely essential, non-accidental, incapable of making a difference, anger would evaporate into self-identity, impotence, remorse. Rage and remorse then, are both outcomes of the failure to recognize the indirect, mediating, nature of speech as our expression of interest. Our interest is not identical to the Good (language), yet it needs to be nurtured as that which draws us to the Good. Rage, then, has no compassion because it vulgarizes passion into physiology: remorse has no liveliness because it sublimates potency into abstraction.

As for Kierkegaard's notion of irony, his construal of it as self-consuming shows that he could only see the anger or polemic of irony, rather than the irony of anger. In this respect, sheer anger shares more with Kierkegaard than it wishes (in its anger) to acknowledge. Kierkegaard treats irony as being dominated by anger unless it is "mastered" by a totalization in which irony is "reduced to a moment"<sup>25</sup>; the alternative is to recognize anger's need to be ruled (mastered) by irony in a movement which keeps a place for anger by allowing it to revive the very movement of speech within which it seeks its place.

Positive irony (as the work of mastery, e.g. mediating anger) can afford to be generous because it is oriented to what is truly

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25. Kierkegaard, p.337.

required, to the creation of luxury as a speaking that is not merely reactive (enraged or remorseful) but has a positive version of strong speech as the practice of our desire to theorize. The ideal speaker seeks to re-integrate, on every occasion, the accidental beginnings of his speech (his practice) with its deep need to re-achieve distinction: the distinction between accident and value or end, the distinction that is valuable for speech.

Our interest in re-constructing Kierkegaard's interest in a notion of discipline that is "cherished", as an interest that is decisive for ideal speaking, has brought us to face with a central problem that we now need to develop throughout the remainder of this essay. The problem is this: how does the ideal speaker's need for a strong notion of irony raise as decisive the problem of mastery? To put this more briefly: what is the problem of mastery, and why is it decisive?

As we shall see in the following Chapter, the risk of mastery is intemperance. If rage and remorse demonstrate the need for a strong notion of mastery or discipline, they also remind us that the virtue referenced by this strong notion will be temperance. We have said; if anger is to be the beginning of justice, it will need to be temperate. Yet mastery (of anger) is a course of action that could invite intemperance.

Anger tempts speakers towards the sheer affirmation of physiology (rage) or the sheer denial of it (guilt). The ideal speaker needs to moderate (i.e. master) anger ironically. So anger raises the problem of mastery. Kierkegaard as we have seen recommended that irony needed to be mastered. Yet Kierkegaard's hidden topic was anger, not

irony: it is anger, not irony, that needs to be mastered. The following two Chapters, therefore, will be addressed towards the need to provide an account of ironic mastery such that it enables the ideal speaker to fulfil his strong relation to language, i.e. we ask: what notion of mastery allows the ideal speaker to speak in a truly valuable way?

CHAPTER THREECOMPETENCE AND JUSTICE.1. Temperance: Self-expression and inquiry.

How can we recommend the need for mastery (e.g. the mastery of anger) without succumbing to the excess of being seduced by mere skill, technique, and thus being led into an attitude of arrogance? We have an urgent need for a formulation of the place of mastery. The previous chapter has shown that the decision to evade the work of mastering anger leads to its degeneration. The failure to work allows a kind of entropy to set in, with its resultant disintegrating effect on social action. Whereas social action is the engagement with circumstance, rage is merely circumstantial and remorse is merely the attempted negation of circumstance. Yet the acceptance of mastery carries with it the risk of smugness - i.e. attachment to one's own competence: instead of a society of beasts (rage) or a society of narcissists (remorse) we would have a society of egotists, interested only in their reputations. We would be driven from one atrophy of conversation to another. So our task in this chapter is to provide an account of the fruits of mastery in something beyond, and something more compelling, than mastery itself. This "something" is our essential relation to language as unity - and it is this relation that we shall be aiming to recollect within our inquiry.

Let's remind ourselves of why mastery is needed, by way of seeking its character. Without mastery, the expression of anger is prone to excess. Anger's risk is that it could become repetitive, caught in its own trap where it is unable to recollect the idea of improvement. It would move in a circle within which it merely exem-

plified the worst faults of its interlocutor - excessive hubris, unwillingness to listen, and so on - thereby ending up as a mere copy of injustice, dedicated only to the rule of sheer interaction. Anger's insistence in this respect leads to imperialism: everything else tends to be treated as an enemy, something to be angry about, or a conspiritor, something that will help out the polemic.

The excess of anger, then, would result whenever its interest is subjected to the rule of sheer assertiveness. Kierkegaard writes: "When subjectivity asserts itself, irony appears" <sup>1</sup>. He can be seen to address our problem if we recall that his version of irony resonates with the idea of anger. When subjectivity asserts itself, anger appears. So, the assertiveness of anger might only (at worst) be that of the subject: it might fail to become something stronger than the solipsism of the egotist.

In the face of violence, the accidental violence of conditions, or the oriented violence of betrayal, it is tempting to respond to the threat against self-identity by re-affirming self with greater intensity. The attraction of anger lies in the self-possessed vitality it is capable of generating through its very expression: anger achieves something - a heightened sense of self - without the further need for anything extra. Anger seems to be complete, as the solution to the threat against self. Anger in this instance fuels the maintenance of self-identity. This temptation, to be attracted to what anger provides without further ado, needs to be resisted because it is oriented to nothing more than survival, that is, the survival of the self. It is oblivious to the question of what is valuable, since value could never be questioned merely by orienting to survival. The difference between survival and demise is other than the distinction between value and its opposite. The difference

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1. Kierkegaard, 1968, p.280.



between survival and demise is not a truly valuable difference. To orient to this difference as decisive is to turn away from value: to treat anger as a means to survival (of the self) leads to the denial of value practised in the rule of physiology.

Our question is: what does anger require in order to be mastered? This question will be answered by a reflection that sustains inquiry into the value of mastering anger. And this requires that we provide a formulation of the decisive character of the course of action we are calling "mastering anger", or in other words, the decisiveness of its particular orientation to language.

Let us turn now to an example of one who seeks justice yet is tempted by an egotistic version of mastery. We will examine how mastery becomes egotistic (or intemperate) when it degenerates into competence. Then we will ask what it is that competence references: the Desire for justice. To conclude this chapter, we will develop the notion that genuine rule or justice (rather than intelligence) requires the influence of temperance.<sup>2</sup>

Socrates' main interlocutors in Charmides or Temperance are Charmides himself and his older cousin Critias. Since, well before Plato came to write the dialogue, the two youthful interlocutors had moved along from the role of participants in a conversation with Socrates written by Plato, to becoming two of the Thirty Tyrants who briefly held sway over Athens near the end of the Peloponnesian War, we can use the dialogue as a vehicle for reflection on a number of important relationships. We shall be considering the opposition between temperance and tyranny, and more deeply its relation to justice. Our attention will also dwell on the problem of knowing the self and in what sense temper-

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2. Chapter Four will then develop more fully what justice (influenced by temperance) is.

ance involves knowing the self. It will emerge that Critias' Desire for justice (which occasionally involves anger) founders because of his deep-rooted intemperance. This will allow us to develop the problem of the origins of justice. We can begin here by examining the relationship between Charmides and Critias as it is revealed to us in their conversation with Socrates.

Our story is the story of two cousins, one of whom because of his great beauty attracts much attention and turns many heads. Amazement and confusion reign when he enters a room; he is forever accompanied by a troop of admirers; old and young alike gaze at him as if he were a statue. Charmides creates mystique and awe around him: his interlocutors, through some silent compulsion, become his admirers, his observers, his wonder-stricken devotees. Although Charmides' beauty bespeaks a harmony of proportion, he will, we can predict, have a hard time achieving true temperance when most of those who come within his orb lapse into a state of sheer rapture. In whatever place Charmides finds himself, inquiry and the pursuit of genuinely truthful (worthwhile) speech will be hard-pressed to establish its claim. Our initial and most basic piece of advice to any teacher taking on responsibility for Charmides would be to be especially mindful of this risk attendant on the beauty of his pupil. Socrates will want to see whether Critias, as Charmides' guardian, is dealing well or badly with this risk: and already his first question, prior to any mention or sight of Charmides, addresses the problem that the latter will come to embody. "I asked whether any of (the youth) were remarkable for sophrosyne or beauty, or both" (Plato 1970, 153d). Socrates wants to know what Critias thinks of the relationship between sophrosyne and beauty.<sup>3</sup>

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3. The word sophrosyne means temperance, health of soul or self-composure. Jowett translates it sometimes as "temperance", sometimes as "wisdom", sometimes as both: see Introduction to Charmides in Plato, 1970, p.35. We keep the word sophrosyne in all quotations.

Critias' opening words seem to show clearly enough that Critias is really more interested in beauty than in temperance: in other words, that he too is in awe of Charmides.

"Of the beauties", he says, "I fancy that you will soon be able to form a judgement. For those who are just entering are the advanced guard and lovers of the great beauty of the day, as he is thought to be, and he is likely to be not far off himself" (154a).

Charmides is about to make his entrance. Perhaps it is asking too much of Critias to remember temperance before beauty when he is, after all, provoked to speak as he does because of the circumstance that he has just seen some of Charmides' admirers enter. Critias speaks as a witness to those who are themselves witness to Charmides' beauty. Yet it is precisely because beauty has the tendency to turn speakers into awed witnesses that there is a need for them to collect themselves in the face of its risk.

More is going on in Critias' talk however, than a simple declaration of his preference for beauty over wisdom: unlike most of the others around Charmides, Critias is no mere worshipper of beauty. Critias has a self-awareness that the worshipper lacks. If he has already shown his inability to remember temperance in the face of the aura of beauty, he nevertheless makes a show of doing so in his invitation to Socrates to "form a judgement". On the matter of beauty, first judgements when favourable are generally last judgements: not only in the sense of not changing one's mind about the beauty of the object, but more deeply, because the desire to evaluate, to inquire, to genuinely converse, usually becomes submerged in one's waxing enthusiasm. So Critias is inviting Socrates to make his last judgement, to stop being a philosopher (lover of virtue) and to become instead merely a lover of beauty (a forgetter of virtue). Critias

hopes that "the great beauty of the day" will elicit the same awe and amazement and confusion from Socrates as from all the others. Critias seems to have some stake in the enforcable character of Charmides' beauty, its capacity to short-circuit our judgement and make us forget our reason. And somehow this seems to be a vulgarization of beauty, a use of beauty for corrupt ends, a celebration of all that is worst about beauty and a wilful neglect of all that is best. Critias, instead of re-collecting the good of beauty, will use the fact that it appears good as a way of banishing judgement and reason - i.e. precisely the capacity to inquire into what is good. Critias is interested in what appears good not in what is good.

Now as well as tempting others to become awed. Critias also, at the other extreme, tempts the philosopher who resists him into austerity. It would be austere to think that what appears good is (necessarily) bad, simply because it can be corruptly used to kill the interest in what is good. Socrates has to resist the excesses of sheer enthusiasm and austerity: he must resist either the worship or the hatred of what appears good: he must avoid excessive emotion in the face of appearance. Interestingly avoiding excessive emotion is often taken to reflect austerity: but now we can see that austerity is actually a kind of excess (of hatred) rather than an avoidance of excess. Austerity is the hatred of what appears good. Perhaps our task now is to address those who think that "avoiding excess emotion" is austere, by re-formulating it in strong terms rather than as "avoidance". In this chapter we seek to re-formulate it as the interest in temperance, and to re-collect the passion of this interest.

Critias soon shows that his interest is in reputation. He prefers his listeners, like himself, to orient to reputation (what

appears good) rather than to worth (what is good). Reputations are dependent on advance notices and revues, praise without foundation, in short, the artful creation of a whole web of beliefs about their subjects. The man with a reputation relies, in order to confirm and augment it, on being able to trade on and gloss the faithfully held pre-conceptions, beliefs - taken - for - knowledge, and enthusiastic hopes that people have. Thus Critias, after informing Socrates that Charmides is of the same family as he is, gives his response to Socrates' request that he should reveal his soul rather than his body. He says: "I can tell you that he is indeed a philosopher already, and also a considerable poet, not in his own opinion only, but in that of others"(155a). For Critias the fact that there are others who corroborate the opinion is telling: Critias is more interested in the reputation Charmides has as a philosopher than in the nature of philosophy itself. Notice in both of the utterances we have quoted, that Critias wants to appear modest: rather than state his own opinion and answer to that, he is careful to make his statements rest on the opinion of others. Yet , despite his wish to appear disinterested, Critias does have a particular commitment to his speech. He wants the opinions of others to do his work for him: let us say for the present that he wants to use Charmides' beauty as a vehicle for establishing his own reputation - as Charmides' older cousin, teacher, and benefactor. To say that Critias wants his statements to be justified by the opinions of others is not to say that he never boasts. Boasting and exaggeration are closely allied to the reliance on the opinions of others. This is because the opinions of others, when fanned by their awe of a reputation, are liable to whip themselves into frenzied excess. The apparent modesty of relying on the opinions of others covers over the boastful impulse to be swayed or persuaded by those very opinions in the first place: the impulse to make the opinions of others count, in every sense.

Yet it is also becoming apparant that reputations, because they must justify themselves, run the risk of exposure at any time. The risk is extreme in the presence of an interlocutor who is really interested in what is good rather than in simply resting with what appears good (i.e. with the opinions of others, or with sheer beauty). This helps to account for Critias' way of talking with Socrates at this stage, prior to Charmides' joining the conversation. He wants to re-organize Socrates' interest, to make Socrates forget his real interest, to compel Socrates to choose beauty and opinion over temperance. Socrates as we shall see, is gradually being placed in a difficult position by Critias - a situation in which, as we argued earlier, he must avoid the extremes of choosing sheer beauty and opinion (i.e. succumbing to Critias) on the one hand, or merely rejecting them (being austere) on the other. That is, Socrates must re-achieve temperance. Merely to reject beauty and opinion would be to sacrifice the possibility of conversation, the possibility of teaching Charmides and Critias to reflect on their relationship as an icon of the relation between beauty and temperance. For Critias, at present, that relationship stands as an opportunity to exploit the preference for beauty and opinion over temperance - and indeed to exploit the apparently temperate itself for this end. We can now understand why Critias would secretly fear the intrusion of Socrates into this situation. Critias is seeking to tranquilize Socrates in order to forestall the threat he poses to the tranquility Critias already efficiently organises. Critias' notion of mastery or temperance is efficient organization: Critias' wants, as we shall see, to be competent.

Precisely through all of his efforts to control and manipulate the situation in the interests of appearance, impressiveness, and so



on, Critias exposes and reveals but does not genuinely express his own character. When Socrates asks him to call Charmides over to take part, Critias, turning to an attendant, says: "Call Charmides, and tell him that I want him to come and see a physician about the illness of which he spoke to me". Then, explaining to Socrates that Charmides has lately been complaining of a headache, he asks; "Now why should you not make him believe that you know a cure for the headache" (155b). Critias is asking Socrates to estrange himself, to become a physician giving answers (cures) rather than a philosopher asking questions. Critias is trying to cramp Socrates' style, to render him ineffective, so as to maintain his own control over the situation. He wants Socrates to answer to him: he wants the better (the philosopher) to answer to the worse (the physician). Critias tries to make Socrates worse than he is: that is, he is making it hard for Socrates to be temperate.

The same words are making Charmides out to be worse than he is reputed to be. Critias had just spoken glowingly of Charmides as a philosopher and a poet. Now he has to turn Socrates the philosopher, into some sort of physician in order to induce Charmides to come to talk with him. Critias does not seem to place much faith in all the recommendations he has just made for Charmides' character. If he did, he would expect nothing to give Charmides greater pleasure and incentive than the news that a philosopher, Socrates, was in their midst singling him out to converse with. Despite all he has said, we see that Critias places little faith in Charmides. He does not consider Charmides capable of exercising true judgement, of being decisive on his own behalf, but instead reveals his view of him as one who could only be moved by matters of immediate discomfort and self-concern. Part of Critias' respect and esteem for the opinions of others, is his image of action as the expres-



sion of self-interest. Critias' notion of what motivates action is making it hard for both Socrates and Charmides to live up to their best possibilities. Critias' notion tends to confirm itself by acting (or interacting) in such a way as to make others worse than they are. Critias' device of the physician, then, is his way of trying to make the interaction confirm what (he thinks) he already knows.

Critias exposes but does not genuinely express himself. What he exposes is his lack of faith in Charmides, or better, his lack of faith in his own words (about Charmides). Critias speaks (faithlessly) because he is interested in reputation rather than temperance. Critias is one who tries to master situations rather than master himself. As we shall see, what his mastery really amounts to is a kind of competence. Critias values competence as the highest. Competence is a weak version of self-mastery because it seeks to control interaction rather than master and use physiology (nature) for the sake of conversation. Sheer competence, or, for now, the interest in reputation, is a kind of intemperance or failure of temperance. Later, however, we shall need to address the strong interest or strong requirement referenced by competence. Now, however, the important point is that competence, as a kind of intemperance, does not genuinely express the self. In some way that we must pursue, the requirement of temperance seems to be a requirement to express the self. Expressing the self means: having faith in one's own words, or having genuine conviction<sup>4</sup>. Critias is unable to do justice to Charmides or Socrates (i.e. he tempts them into intemperance) because he does not express himself: that is, because of his own intemperance.

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4. The problem of conviction is developed as the problem of justice's education of temperance, below, Chapter 6

Socrates himself has already, a few moments earlier, experienced the temptation of intemperance. He confesses that when Charmides entered, he was quite astonished at his beauty and stature. Socrates remembers his concern for the essential (for worth) by remarking that Charmides is a paragon, if he has only the "slight addition" of a noble soul. Socrates reminds himself of the essential nature of the soul in comparison with the accidents of bodily beauty. Having re-composed himself once, Socrates has to undergo the harder test of beginning to converse with Charmides: knowing that this is to come, he has had to decide whether to accede to Critias' request that he pretend to be a physician. The austere temptation here is to refuse: simply to say "No" to the attempts at manipulation, at forcing one to orient to appearances, taking on a false role, becoming dishonest, and so on. Yet here the price usually paid for scruples of this kind (which betray rather than deny the depth of their preoccupation with appearances) is graphically illustrated. To make this denial would certainly intimidate and frighten off modest Charmides, for he would try to defend himself from the tricks being played upon him. Since modesty is too defensive already we can see in this instance a key to the real problem with austerity. Austerity is aloof from every interest in appearance, including modesty's obscurity and reputation's desire for impressiveness. Austerity, in its ironic negativity, would be unable to converse with either Charmides or Critias. Austerity invites both competitiveness (the interest in reputation) and modesty to do more of what they already do too much: to conceal their genuine requirements from themselves for the sake of protecting themselves.

Instead, in his conversation with modest beauty (Charmides) and boastful reputation (Critias), Socrates needs to provide for an interest

in revealing the self (appearing). The strong interest in self-revelation is oriented to that for the sake of which it ought to be pursued: to what is truly animating or compelling for the self. Deeply, self-expression remembers that it must not stop with itself, that it is not undertaken for its own sake: deeply it is not an interest in appearance. Rather, it is the interest in making the interest in what is good appear. Socrates wants to show in his conversation with the two cousins the reciprocal relationship between self-expression and the inquiry into what is (rather than what merely appears) good. Socrates can risk making mistakes because this is essential to the examination of what is good. A mistake occurs when one's speech fails to re-achieve the intimate community it desires between self-revelation and the inquiry into what is genuinely good. This is the intimacy that actually makes the interest in what is good appear. Even the mistake is essential testimony to (ought to be used in order to re-collect) the interdependence of the life of self expression and the life of inquiry and self-examination. In the absence of the willingness to genuinely reveal the self, there arises in its place either modesty (the disinterest in mediating appearances, the disinterest in making our interest in what is good appear), or competitiveness (the interest in appearing good, the interest in immediate reputation). Without self-expression, that is, the interest in inquiry suffers: without the interest in inquiry, true self-expression wanes. Inquiry and self-expression are interdependent in the sense that the active pursuit of each, in order to thrive, needs and also fosters the active pursuit of the other.

Critias thinks he can weaken Socrates by forcing him to appear as worse than (Critias knows) he is. Critias here is abusing what he knows (i.e. that Socrates is a philosopher) for the sake of his own will.

Critias turns Desire into self-centred will: this is the core of his intemperance. Socrates must now show that his analytic interest in self-expression is not compromised by his being cast into the role of a physician. Far from it: an essential ingredient of the interest in self-expression is its need to work constructively with the risks of false appearance. The speaker must always, in the midst of the exigencies of convention and the accidents of accessibility, endure the falsity, superficiality, partiality, and so on, within which his interest appears to others and theirs appears to him. The desire to avoid these exigencies produces modesty. The desire to simply manipulate and organise how they appear produces competitiveness. The desire to achieve a position of aloof indifference to them produces austerity. The ideal speaker must instead take the risk of using the potential or actual falsity of the guise within which he appears (within which he happens to have become available as an alter for his interlocutor) as a vehicle for questing self-expression. He must take the risk of making a mistake. He must integrate the comic hubris that is an intrinsic part of giving expression to inquiry, of bringing the interest in what is good to appearance. He must continue to work, rather than panic (as modesty does) or merely deal "effectively" with the panic (as competitiveness and austerity do), in the face of what is awkward.

Socrates tells us, though not Critias or Charmides, about his awkwardness. He relates how, when Charmides came and sat next to him, he experienced the moving effects of his beauty. He tells us:

"But I, my friend, was beginning to feel awkward; my former bold belief in my powers of conversing naturally with him had vanished. And when Critias told him that I was the person who had the cure, he looked at me in an indescribable manner, and made as though to ask me a question. And all the people in the palaestra crowded about us, and at that moment, my good friend, I caught a sight of

the inwards of his garment and took the flame. Then I could no longer contain myself. I thought how well Cydias understood the nature of love, when, in speaking of a fair youth, he warns someone "not to bring the fawn in the sight of the lion to be devoured by him", for I felt that I had been overcome by a sort of wild-beast appetite".(155c-e)

Socrates is telling his "friend", his ideal listener, about self-expression's need to collect itself with its awkwardness, about self-expression's need to live well with its awkwardness. Socrates does not tell Critias or Charmides of his awkwardness in this way. Since they already have a stock response to the problem of awkwardness, if Socrates reported it directly to them they would instantly adopt their respective stances. Charmides would retreat and become modestly silent; Critias would loudly use it as a vindication of the awesome beauty of Charmides, i.e. the irresistible power of appearance. Charmides and Critias would merely repeat themselves. This shows us that self-expression must be ironic rather than literal. Self-expression is stronger than self-report or self-description.

Here Socrates would be treating self-expression's need (to work in the face of awkwardness, in the face of necessary incongruity or blemish within appearance) as its own solution: as if self-expression's problem was merely one of self-description, confession, sheer honesty. (As we have already seen, when anger makes this mistake, it turns into rage). Yet deeply there would be nothing awkward about this: the art of self-description could simply be learned (through consciousness raising, good upbringing, or whatever) and then more or less efficiently practiced. But it would then evade the centrality and essentiality of the problem of awkwardness, that is, the intrinsic place of awkwardness within the interest in making what is good appear (come to speech, come to self-expression). Awkwardness is part of our fate rather than a

defect of upbringing or social structure. The ideal speaker must continually collect himself in the face of the essential awkwardness of making an interest in what is good appear in the midst of beauty and ugliness, honesty and deception, collection and dispersion. Part of this self-collecting or resolving is resisting the temptation to eliminate awkwardness, the temptation to imagine that it is merely awkwardness itself that needs to be brought to appearance. The problem of awkwardness needs to remember its place, not as an obstacle to communication, but as an icon of the problem of inquiry. More deeply, it stands as an icon of the inquiry married to leadership that generates good teaching. Socrates must resist the intemperance of eliminating his awkwardness by simply describing it (making it appear): he must remember his Desire to teach Critias and Charmides.

At the opposite extreme, if Socrates does not describe his awkwardness, he must also resist the temptation to completely hide or obliterate it. This would be the alternative, that is, austere way of generating a Critias and a Charmides who repeated themselves. They would now, in this instance, protect modesty and competitiveness by imagining Socrates to be unique, a freak of nature occurring nowhere else. They would be able to imagine that Socrates is miraculously immune from the problem of awkwardness, immune from the effects of beauty: in a word, superhuman, more god-like than human. If in the previous instance Socrates had to resist being premature towards his awkwardness (miscarrying it or aborting it), now he has to resist being tardy with it, withholding it, becoming fixated on it. That is, he must transform his awkwardness into work. He must find, through and within the conversation, the best way of expressing the depth of the problem of awkwardness, as a feature of the conversation itself. Socrates



wants to show that the problem of awkwardness is not, on the one hand, simply "his" problem needing rapid externalization, nor on the other hand, a problem so intractable that it cannot be articulated or expressed at all. He needs to display his interest in the problem as an example of the kind of mediation that the interest in worth needs in order to make it an intimate of self-expression. He needs to be neither early nor late, but to respect the untimeliness of awkwardness as an inner moment of conversation. Socrates needs to remember the need to transform awkwardness in order to realize its educative possibilities: in order to recollect its resonances with teaching. Transforming awkwardness requires an ironic notion of self-expression, or a sense of the difference between self-expression (irony) and self-description (literalness). Ironic self-expression makes use of appearances, whether partial, deceptive, or simply false, as a way of recollecting its Desire to make the interest in what is good appear.

Socrates tells us that "when (Charmides) asked me if I knew the cure for the headache, I answered, though with an effort, that I did know" (155e). To transform awkwardness is to respect its demands to bring together philosophy and authority. To refuse this work, through the temptations of modesty, competitiveness, self-description, or austerity, is to sever inquiry and rule, to sacrifice one for the sake of the other: indeed, as we shall be attempting to show, it is ultimately to sacrifice both for the sake of one, the whole for the sake of a part. For to concentrate one-sidedly on a part (to forget the whole) is to distort or weaken even that part itself - by forgetting the need to provide for its place within the whole.



The one who refuses the work of transforming awkwardness ends in seeking to eliminate the problem of awkwardness, by forgetting the nature of the part. He forgets the nature of the part by substituting his part (modesty, wilfulness, and so on) for the whole - i.e. as a part that brooks no awkwardness, a part that is self-sufficient. As a result, he forgets the need to work: the need to be a responsible part. He forgets the work of continually inquiring and so re-collecting the place of the part within the whole. For this he substitutes a concocted wish to make the whole present. The work of transforming awkwardness, then, is the work of using the part by seeking to make it a participant within the whole: the refusal of awkwardness is the dream of by-passing the part altogether in order to recapitulate the whole. Yet ironically the speech that seeks to re-present the whole, in its refusal of awkwardness (i.e. in its desire to eliminate awkwardness) has merely elected to elevate one of the parts into the whole. It is pretentious (pretending that its part - e.g. competitiveness - is the whole) rather than temperate (acknowledging that its part - i.e. its need to work to transform awkwardness - is also its need to re-collect how the part belongs to the whole). Pretentiousness speaks as if it had no needs: temperance acknowledges its deep need by seeking to make its work display its need.

The part that is pretending rather than participating suffers the pain of trying to be what it is not. Socrates, on the other hand, rather than trying to be what he is not, turns the exigency of appearing to be other than he is into the enjoyable work of re-collecting what he is: one whose interest is in participating in the whole by seeking to re-orient the parts. Socrates seeks to re-collect how the particular (the part) needs orienting to the whole as its way of truly

particularizing itself. Nietzsche writes of justice that "this virtue never has a pleasing quality; it never charms; it is harsh and strident."<sup>5</sup> Yet if the achievement of justice requires temperance we are beginning to see that it therefore requires a certain charm. Socrates will charm the parts by relieving them of the pain of pretending to be complete: he will charm them by showing how they are in lively need.

Socrates will remind the parts of their strong need. After answering Charmides with difficulty, Socrates remembers the deep point of this difficulty by telling Charmides the story of his (Charmides') neediness. Since the parts belong within the whole, the cure of Charmides' headache belongs within the cure of his soul (as one of its parts). "And the cure of the soul, my dear youth, has to be effected by the use of certain charms, and these charms are fair words" (157a). The fair words of inquiry charm the soul by teaching it to enjoy its place (its part, its participation) in the whole.

## 2. Charmides' headache.

Socrates, however, has a competitor for the custody of Charmides' soul, one who would turn the well-being of the soul into something one could compete for: Critias himself. He replies to the charm of Socrates by saying:

The headache will be a blessing to my young cousin, if the pain in his head compels him to improve his mind: yet I can tell you, Socrates, that Charmides is not only pre-eminent in beauty among his equals, but also in that quality for which you say you have the charm, *sophrosyne*, is it not? (He continues:) Let me tell you that he is the most temperate of the young men of today, and for his age inferior to none in any quality". (157c-d)

In contrast to Socrates, who has begun to charm Charmides by reminding him of his neediness, Critias inflicts pain on Charmides by speaking

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5. Nietzsche, 1949, p.36.

pretentiously of him. He speaks of a Charmides who needs nothing, who encapsulates the whole. At the present, Critias is managing to pass on the pain - of the part pretending to be the whole - to Charmides: for it is Critias who generates Charmides' headache. Critias gives Charmides a headache by being boastful rather than charming, pretentious rather than temperate. Instead of re-collecting the nature of temperance as the work of making the parts truly participate within the whole - and thus allowing the parts to develop - Critias betrays temperance by doing the exact opposite: by boasting about it. He speaks of a supposedly temperate person, Charmides, as if that person had no needs. As a side point, we can notice how this relieves Critias of the responsibility of reflecting seriously on how his guardianship of Charmides ought to minister to the latter's needs. But more deeply, Critias flies directly in the face of temperance by imagining it to eliminate, rather than to testify to, neediness. Critias thinks that his action of educating Charmides aims towards relief from need, both for himself and Charmides. Critias thinks that the purpose or end of education is to relieve one from the need to work, the need to transform essential awkwardness. Critias does not know the true good or end towards which his action aims. Critias' aim is weak, deflected. He is having difficulty giving embodiment to the true good or aim of education as a course of action. At present, his aim, while too weak to educate Charmides (to make Charmides remember his neediness), is strong enough to deflect the painful burden of pretention onto Charmides in the form of the latter's headache. Critias is tempted to think that as long as he succeeds in this, he is genuinely succeeding. Socrates must bring home to Critias the unacknowledged weakness of aim that this disguises. Whereas Socrates must charm Charmides, he must wean Critias of the false magnanimity of treating the headache as Charmides' blessing, by bringing him to realize that it is really his pain. Before

Socrates can begin to charm or cure Critias, he needs to give Critias back his own pain. Socrates needs to give Critias a pain in the head: Socrates needs to become a pain for Critias, as the beginning of education, as the beginning of Critias' quest for real strength of aim.

### 3. Injustice and the rule of intelligence.

At this point of the dialogue, Critias thinks he is successfully managing and organizing the interaction. Because he is simply concerned with the work of appearing in a favourable light, nothing that has happened so far appears to him to have reflected badly on him (or on Charmides). So far, Critias feels more complacency than panic at the prospect of Charmides' conversation with Socrates. Notice how he prepares the way for this by laying great stress (in the last speech we quoted) on Charmides' youth: Charmides is, in effect, more temperate than his peers, very good for his age. Critias formulates Charmides' peers as his competitors: he is saying to Socrates that the standard of excellence is competition among peers. The one who comes out best, on this standard, is for Critias excellent and temperate per se. On this criterion, Critias has reason enough, no doubt, to feel confident that Charmides will excel himself. Similarly, Critias is happy enough, on the basis of what has happened so far, about the prospective outcome of his own conversation with Socrates. After all, he has successfully manipulated Socrates into pretending (to be a physician). And like the intemperate one who does not properly care for the whole, he moves from one speech to the next blissfully unaware of the overall impression his talk makes. If it suits him at one moment to assert that Charmides is a philosopher and a poet, and at the next to induce Charmides to talk by pretending to him that Socrates is a physician, he does both: he affirms both parts without reflecting

on the kind of whole in which they could possibly belong together<sup>6</sup>.

In short, Critias so far is managing to deflect his pain. All this, however, is soon to change, much to Critias' horror. Socrates' discussion with Charmides on the nature of temperance takes what is, to Critias, an unwelcome turn. Charmides, after a few attempts to say what temperance is, finally says he remembers something he heard from somebody: that "temperance is doing our own business" (161b). When Socrates rebukes him for simply repeating what Critias, or some other philosopher, has told him, Critias interjects: "Someone else then, for certainly I have not"(161c). Critias, at the very moment that Charmides quotes temperance as doing one's own business, realizes with a shock that he no longer wants Charmides to do his (Critias's) business. He had imagined that to have alter doing one's work was an unequivocal blessing, because he imagined that it was an easy matter to reap the reward. Like the natural star pupil or the deferential worker, Charmides is easy to exploit: he works diligently and seeks little for himself. (This helps to explain why Critias tells him that he needs nothing). Now Critias is beginning to realize that he has been too complacent: because of the youthful innocence of Charmides, Critias had forgotten the work it takes to reap the benefits of alter's doing one's business. That is, with Charmides this exploitation has taken very little effort: so Critias imagined that it was possible to make others do all the work. Now he is beginning to realize that this is impossible, that there is always a minimal amount of work to be done, namely, the work of reaping the benefits, of making the fruits

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6. Critias is reminiscent of a story, related by Freud in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, of the man who is accused of returning a borrowed kettle in a damaged condition. He first protests that he never borrowed it, then that it was damaged anyhow, and finally that it must have been damaged after he had returned it. Like the parts of a dream, each part of the speech has the same end: yet it is a far from temperate reply!

of alter's work count as ego's business. This is a first step for Critias. For the first time, he realizes his need to understand himself as needing to work: right now, of course, he wants to minimize the work needed rather than to do the real work of truly comprehending the need. For now, he wants to deal with (organize) the problem, rather than comprehend it, understand it as the comprehensive problem it is. His model of understanding is still operationalizing rather than comprehending.

Critias is competing with Socrates in the sense that he imagines Socrates has joined battle with him for Charmides' soul. He thinks that if Charmides does not do his business, this will be because he has begun to do Socrates' business.. Critias's interest in reputation amounts to the idea that if others are not doing your business (contributing in their words and actions to your reputation) this is because they are making you do theirs (using your words and actions to enhance their own standing). The strongest man is the most persuasive man and the art of persuasion, for Critias, is the art of effectively construing and having others construe the words spoken about you in a tellingly favourable light. Conversation, for Critias, is the negotiation, between competitors, of these continually generated construals, for the ultimate prize of reputation. Conversation, then, is the self-centred interest in appearance: it is the interest in "doing one's own business" to telling effect in the above sense. So it means something like "doing oneself a favour", getting one's interlocutors to do one's business. The competitive ambition of speech, then, is to become the most persuasive one within the conversation, to make everybody else do one's business: that is, to kill the conversation by becoming the Tyrant.

Unlike Socrates, who is willing to endure the awkwardness of appearing to be what he is not, Critias is unwilling to acknowledge what



he is unless this brings him immediate benefit. Critias thinks he can simply disavow his authorship when the risk that to acknowledge it will reflect badly on him is too great. He has begun to see that Charmides does not really understand any of the definitions he gives of temperance, including, he suspects, this one. Understanding something, as we have seen, presently means for Critias, the ability to organize one's speech about it in such a way that it is more persuasive than anybody else's, that it can win any debate, that it can make one's interlocutor do one's business (by "understanding" it in the same way). Charmides, of course, is hopeless at understanding in this sense. The realization is beginning to dawn horribly on Critias that this is the necessary outcome of the way he has been teaching Charmides. Critias has been teaching Charmides by "persuading" him in the above sense, i.e. by making Charmides do his business for him: now he is seeing that this in fact renders Charmides incapable of understanding (even in the weak sense of organizing speech around) anything that Critias has told him. Even within the limits of Critias' own enterprise, it is becoming clear that Charmides, necessarily - i.e. as a consequence of Critias' own version of teaching and understanding - is unqualified to do Critias' business. Persuading others to do one's business seems, increasingly, to be impossible.

Yet it would not be enough for Socrates simply to show Critias that this is impossible: i.e. that it is impossible to realize the ends of tyranny by having everybody else do one's business. As well as showing its impossibility, Socrates must show its undesirability: and this means re-collecting both the possibility and the desirability of the truly good or strong alternative. We shall see that Critias' problem is that he is exhausted by the question of possibility and thus has forgotten the question of desirability. At this point, Critias is



beginning to develop some initial sense of the undesirability of having Charmides do his business for him. But as yet it is weak: it merely amounts to his sense of growing embarrassment at having to endure the ineptitude of Charmides, his shock discovery that Charmides is damaging rather than serving his goal (reputation) with every word he utters. He does not know yet why it is deeply undesirable to make interlocutors do our business: he merely thinks that it is undesirable because it is like trying to do the impossible. He thinks the question of desirability can be subsumed under that of possibility.

Finally, having been goaded beyond his endurance by Charmides' manifest lack of understanding, as well as by the intolerable provocations of both Socrates and Charmides - that even its author probably did not understand the definition - Critias can stand no more. He bursts out:

"Do you imagine, Charmides, because you do not understand the meaning of this definition of sophrosyne that its author likewise did not understand the meaning of his own words?" (162d)

Critias thinks he will resolve the problem through his focus on possibility, understanding, intelligibility - rather than desirability, worth, or principle. If it is impossible, in fact, to get others to do one's business through persuasion (because this method presupposes their weakness, i.e. their inability when tested to do one's business), maybe it can be done by enforcing intelligibility as the paradigm of inquiry. Intelligence has, at this point, made the insight that persuaders cannot really rule, because their version of rule depends on weakness. Persuaders at best can only rule followers, weaklings, unintelligent ones, ones who do not understand but merely accept. Persuaders rule by turning their subjects into sheep. Critias decides that intelligence is a stronger ruler because it can rule without stultifying the ruled: it rules by

inviting those it rules to the exercise of their intellects. The true ruler is the most intelligent man - the man most qualified for giving an account of things in terms of their intelligibility, their possibility, their conditions of existence, and so forth. This ruler is stronger than the (merely) persuasive one in that he does not have to rely on the implied weakness of those he rules. Intelligence, on the contrary, rules through degrees of strength, for it relies on the enforcably intelligible character of things - i.e. on the use of intelligence by both rulers and ruled. The ruler rules by enforcing the use of intelligence on others: intelligence rules by bringing its alters into its fold.

Intelligence is uncomfortable in the presence of those who differ from itself - the poet, the pleasure-seeker, the lover, or the true philosopher - because it sees them as unruly. They are unruly in their visible refusal to orient themselves to the intelligibility of their actions as the motivating force of those actions. They motivate themselves by "mysterious" (i.e. unintelligible) things. Intelligence is uncomfortable with the idea of unintelligibility, which it equates with mystery, strangeness. Intelligence seeks to rule difference - including the philosopher, who seeks worth rather than sheer intelligibility - by demonstrating that its course of action is really dependent on its prior intelligibility. Whatever poetry, pleasure or philosophy might subsequently turn out to be, for the intelligent critic they depend first on the possibility of being made intelligible. The intelligent critic will seek to show how everything is fundamentally governed by its possibility, its plausibility, its rules of reproduction. The intelligent critic will seek to rule even the philosopher.

Intelligence is motivating Critias' talk. His talk will seek to vindicate intelligence rather than persuasion. He will seek to enforce Socrates' agreement that intelligence ought to rule: that is, he will seek to rule Socrates, which for him means, make Socrates do his work. In this situation it might be tempting for Socrates to shut Critias up, for a number of reasons. It would prevent Critias from imposing himself on his listeners. And since, in the interaction between the two cousins, Critias has clearly been doing the talking and Charmides the listening, would it not do them both good to have the roles reversed? Critias could learn by listening for a change, and Charmides could learn by talking for a change. Critias could discover others and Charmides could discover himself.

In the face of Critian criticism, Socrates has to resist the temptation of Charmidean humanism. Socrates must resist the universalistic, sheerly sympathetic, impulse to let Charmides speak and shut Critias out, to hear Charmides' grievances against the garrulous critic who had silenced him. Socrates has to resist this because it is not for the best. The best thing is not mere "free speech", but that Charmides and Critias begin to ask about the strong alternative to tyranny: in other words, that they begin to inquire in a self-reflective way. By taking up this interest, we can see the good reasons why Socrates should switch the conversation to Critias, as he does by saying:

"Why at his age, most excellent Critias, he can hardly be expected to understand; but you, who are older, and have studied, may well be assumed to know the meaning of (these words); and therefore, if you agree, and accept his definition of temperance, I would much rather argue with you than with him about the truth or falsehood of the definition"(162d-e)

The problem is not that Critias talks too much and that Charmides listens too much. Rather, Critias does not talk well, and Charmides

does not listen well. They talk and listen too much because they do not know what talking or listening really demand in order to be done well. Socrates needs to re-orient Critias and Charmides to the good of talking and the good of listening as parts within the whole conversation. At this point, Charmides needs to listen, because he has discovered the possibility that Critias does not really understand what he is saying. Charmides needs to listen in a way that he has never listened before, that is, he has to listen in a way that gives consideration to the problem of understanding. Deeply, Charmides needs to learn the importance of the understanding, not as the whole, but as having a part to play within the whole - rather than suffering the headache of pretending to understand the whole. And at this point, Critias needs to talk, because he has discovered the problem of making others do one's business. Critias needs to talk in a way that he has never talked before, that is he has to talk in a way that gives consideration to the problem of doing one's own business. Deeply, Critias needs to learn the enjoyment of doing one's own business, rather than suffering the headache of always seeking the most efficient means of getting everybody else to do it. Charmides as we shall see needs to become just in order to understand: Critias needs to become temperate in order to do his own business.

Socrates needs to re-collect for Critias the work of conversation. Socrates needs to engage in the conversation that is community-oriented rather than critical or humanistic. The humanist conversation is not dialectical in that it is centred around the notion of self-determination or self-description. The speaker is not responsible for anything that has already been said by others, hence he can begin afresh all over again. The speaker is "free" in that he is free to ignore whatever he

chooses to ignore. In this way his speech shows his independence, his freedom from the "oppression of influence", his ability to think for himself and make all his own decisions. Humanist speech is fearful of real community because the latter requires the decisiveness of the rule of the best: humanism wants to say that every voice is valid in its own way in order to incorporate it into a flaccid community without awkwardness. Humanist speech lacks development or consequence, determination or accountability, because it wants the worst as well as the best to be self-governing. Humanist speech would have Charmides tediously describe himself without accountability to Critias or influence by him, yet without accountability to worth or influence by it.

Having resisted humanism, Socrates must also avoid mere intelligibility. Critical speech is syllogistic: it knows how to develop, but only logically. It forgets to keep alive the question of the good of its development. Like the mathematician, it enjoys sheer conclusiveness for its own sake. The conclusion is the external "good" towards which the syllogism/conversation moves: once achieved, the conclusion renders the preceding conversation redundant, no longer necessary, external. Merely intelligent conversation follows the rule of "one at a time" leading up to a "closing" or a conclusion.<sup>7</sup> Intelligence sees this everywhere, even in conversations that do not understand their own intelligibility. Intelligence's version of justice, then is taking turns, allocating a scarce resource (time): giving everyone the opportunity to be the most intelligent. Intelligence is meritocracy, the competition of talent, the rule of brains or disembodied minds. Its community is the community of competitors, who do things "one at a time", on their own, rather than together. Even when they look like they are doing something together (e.g. conversing) they are really doing it "one at a time".

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7. See the work of H.Sacks and E.Schegloff for this usage, for example "Opening Up Closings" in R.Turner ed. 1974.

If intelligence is a weak version of justice, it nevertheless is an attempted embodiment of the interest in justice. Intelligence is a course of action oriented towards justice as its end. For example, consider here the legalistic or bureaucratic version of justice. The legal document, the legislative instrument, and so on, embody competent and unambiguous instances of the Desire for justice. Somehow, then, Critias' interest in intelligence and necessity is a (deflected) interest in justice. What is it that provides for a kinship between intelligence and justice?

Essentially, the kinship resides in a quality Critias has in great measure. We have already seen his willingness to interfere and meddle in situations: and we shall see more of it. Justice seems to be born of, and even to require, this willingness to interfere. Justice must not leave things as they are: it must intervene, put things right, change situations. Justice rectifies: it is a very active and vigorous virtue by nature. In this sense, it is the very opposite of temperance. To say that justice is born of a willingness to interfere or meddle is to say that it is born of a kind of intemperance. Unless the initial (meddlesome) Desire for justice works to overcome its intemperance, it develops into competence or intelligibility, legalism or exegesis, rather than genuine justice.

Socrates rules justly by being answerable in his talk for the good of the community as a whole. This requires temperance because Socrates must seek to do what he needs to do in such a way that this is the best thing not only for himself but for everybody. That is, Socrates must develop the interest in rulership rather than merely interfere. So in selecting Critias rather than Charmides as the next speaker Socrates is not giving Critias his turn, or allocating Critias



his fair opportunity, or forgetting about Charmides for now in order to think instead of Critias. Rather, he is doing what is best for both Charmides and Critias as well as himself. Charmides can learn to listen, Critias can learn to speak: Socrates is learning to rule.

Socrates has asked Critias (see page 122 above) if he is willing to accept the definition of temperance as "doing one's own business". When Critias agrees to accept it, Socrates' reply is a brief little comment, "very good", before continuing with a question. There is satisfaction in the remark, but also brevity. This is because something has been achieved, but what has been achieved is only a beginning. What has been achieved is the space to begin working. In getting Critias to accept the responsibility for the definition, to make it analytically "his", Socrates can do the work of making Critias answerable to his talk, i.e. he can make Critias do his own business. Critias thinks that his own business is to rule by getting others to do his business. Right now, that is, Critias does not know what his business is. Nor does he know what ruling is. He thinks that ruling is getting others to do your work: he does not know that ruling is doing your own work in the way that promotes what is best for everybody. Ruling needs a strong sense, in any given situation, of what is best for everybody. Socrates is showing that he has the temperance required to rule Charmides and Critias by expressing what is best for them. Critias, however, thinks he is a ruler but is not a ruler: even of himself, for he does not know what is best for himself ( he does not know his own business). The work of the conversation, then, is to convince Critias that it is more advantageous to him to reflect on and discover what his business is rather than in ruling unwisely (imagining he can rule by getting others to do his business). To put this another



way: Socrates must make Critias reflect on the nature of temperance (self-mastery or rulership) and the need justice has for temperance rather than presuppose that intelligence and justice are the same.

Socrates must converse with Critias, work with him, without being cajoled by him into doing his business. Critias will try to rule Socrates by making him speak about intelligibility and possibility to the exclusion of desirability. It will help us to get the measure of the problem if we anticipate a remark Socrates makes about Critias' commitment to intelligibility. Critias has got into difficulty with the questions Socrates has been raising. Socrates tells us that as Critias

"had a reputation to maintain, he was ashamed to admit before the company that he could not answer my challenge or determine the question at issue; and he made an unintelligible attempt to hide his perplexity" (169c-d).

Critias, who wants sheer intelligibility to rule, becomes unintelligible. We recall that Critias was motivated to re-enter the conversation by intelligence i.e. by the desire, in the face of Charmides' problems with understanding, to make intelligence rather than persuasion rule. We must ask: why does the one who is ruled by intellect - Critias - become unintelligible?

Sheer intelligence seeks to rule (i.e. seeks justice) through abstraction. Intelligence interferes in everything by abstracting from everything that is external to itself. It turns everything into an instance of itself (i.e. an intelligible phenomenon) by ignoring everything else about the thing. That is, it abstracts from the thing's force: from the idea that the thing could be a potential force for good. It abstracts from the spirit that seeks to replenish the good of our resources, that seeks the enjoyment of re-collecting source in our speech. Intelligence abstracts from the spirited integration of

soul and body and instead treats disembodied mind as the whole. So mind segregates itself, severs itself from its inheritance (our resources), and become tangential to the whole rather than an oriented participant in the whole. Yet mind is needed by the whole as one of its lively parts. The deep speaker needs to speak understandingly: that is, not merely intelligently, but - with comprehension. This elaborates the ideal speaker's desire to particularize that we shall consider in Chapter 5 . The ideal speaker is interested in the liveliness of the parts: this requires not intelligence, but comprehension.

Justice requires comprehensive understanding, the vision of the part's true end or excellence within the comprehensive whole. We call this comprehension in order to remind ourselves that it preserves understanding: i.e. it does not dissolve the part into the whole (as if the whole could be re-presented intuitively to the mind) but rather re-animates the part by giving it the vision it needs to truly participate. Comprehension will use the vision of understanding not for the celebration of intelligibility, claritas, but for the work of giving to the part its sense of its true aim or orientation. To comprehend the part is to re-orient it to the comprehensive: to transform it into another occasion on which we re-achieve the enjoyment of belonging to the whole. In comprehension we give understanding its place, and this is both an example of, and a decisive contribution to, enjoyably be-friending the "all is one". The mystic mistrusts intelligence because he has seen instances of its pretentiousness, its didacticism, its abstraction. Yet the mystic forgets the good of comprehensive understanding, hidden within its discursiveness, its sequential character, its temptation to become syllogistic. Deeply all of these excesses cover over (at their roots) a willingness to dwell upon and develop

the part: that is, they conceal the Desire for justice. If the Christian elevation of intelligence to rulership is an instance of forgetting to limit the place of the part, the mystic rejection of comprehension in the name of "direct awareness" of the whole forgets to preserve or develop the place of the part. Mysticism orients to the temptation (or excess) rather than the good of comprehension. The good of comprehension is to develop rather than by-pass the part: its temptation is to imagine that its vision is perspicuous, complete, all-objectifying. Sheer intelligence imagines that it encapsulates the whole (rather than exercise responsibility toward the whole); that it dissolves practice within an ostensive unity of practice and theory (rather than seek to practice this unity within ideal speaking). Sheer intelligence dissolves particularity within itself - rather than, as comprehension or transformed intelligence does, seeking to exercise both the respect and the violence of re-animating the part. Sheer intelligence forgets what comprehension's vision is for.

Because sheer intelligence forgets particularity - that is, because it is more wrapped up in its own universal perspicuity - it becomes tenuous, tangential, incomprehensible. Its speech "covers" everything but reveals or relates to nothing. Its speech seems to hover above everything<sup>8</sup>. Sheer intelligence externalizes itself from what it talks about: in this externalization, abstraction, objectivity, and value-freedom have their common understanding. Sheer intelligence does not acknowledge how it deeply belongs to the community (of parts and usages) it gathers. It treats its speech as constitutive rather than re-animating convention, re-convening spirit<sup>9</sup>.

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8. Recall how Aristophanes in The Clouds portrayed Socrates as hovering in a basket. We read Aristophanes (and Kierkegaard) as reflecting on the excess of sheer intelligence.
9. Karatheodoris (1979) recollects strongly the notion of speaking as assembling, convening, answering to Logos. This is the very thing that hovering, detachment, and so on, forget.

As a way of instancing this, we will summarize the long speech Critias makes as his explication of "doing our own business" (163a-c). First, he draws a distinction between "making" and "doing" in order to insist that he really meant that those who "do" their own business are temperate. Asked by Socrates to justify the distinction, he uses a line from Hesiod, "work is no disgrace", to say that "working and doing" refers to things nobly and usefully done, and is therefore never a disgrace, whereas "making" refers to mundane activities, sometimes disgraceful or dishonourable. So those who "make" the business of others (e.g. make their shoes) may be temperate - though, presumably, not because of this activity. Critias, in the course of this rambling piece of verbal juggling, has simply switched the focus from "one's own business" onto the word "doing". He is trying to evade doing his own work by glossing some obscure semantic distinction between "doing" and "making". This instances graphically the use of terminology, technical distinctions, and so on, to which intelligence is prone in its evasion of depth or worth. Rather than explicate the ideas of nobility and honour that he uses to gloss "doing", Critias focusses instead on the distinction between "doing" (things nobly done) and "making" (things merely done). Critias does not understand the point of making a distinction - as an important first step, to be sure, in the work of explication: instead he substitutes distinguishing for explicating, with the result that he ends up with terminology. Whenever talk or writing seems terminological, we should ask: what kind of reflection is it leaving out? What work is it not doing?

Making terminological distinctions is being meddlesome with the Logos rather than participating in it: trying to use the Logos to do one's private business, rather than genuinely doing one's own business

by remembering how it belongs to the Logos. Terminological distinction blurs genuine distinction (the unfolding of Logos) and the work it calls us to. Take Critias: he has moved words around in such a way as to dissipate the force of the distinction between noble and ignoble into the much weaker one between doing and making. The usage of "doing and making" covers (over), abstracts from, the nature of what is noble by glossing it, presupposing it. Technical speech is a case of distorted priorities: the more important being obscured, pushed out of sight, by the less important. Terminology forgets that the point of dividing is always to re-collect again, as we saw Socrates doing earlier, i.e. that division (between one part and another) ought to remember its auspices: the unity of the whole. We need divisions, parts, and differences as our topics: yet precisely as necessary ways of being strongly oriented to the whole. Hence the divisions and parts we need must seek to be just: that is, strongly bespeaking a vision of their place within the whole, revealing rather than evading, resonating rather than being technical, fertilizing rather than being neologistic. The parts must be partial towards the whole rather towards themselves: centred rather than dispersed. The parts must do their own particular work. In order to achieve justice (do their own particular work) they need to be temperate (oriented towards the whole rather than themselves).

Critias wants intelligibility without a notion of desirability: hence he wants distinctions without asking what their point is, what they are good for. He imagines that justice is possible without temperance. Although terminological talk can sound collected, it is at most neat and schematic: deeply, it is dispersed, for it does not re-gather the Logos, it does not seek to show how its own interest is internal

to the Logos that gathers it. Gathered, it does not gather in response: merely intelligible, it does not do the work of showing desirability. That is, it does not work to show the desirability of being gathered in the whole.

#### 4. Justice's need for Desire

Earlier we said that Critias' problem is that he is exhausted by the question of possibility and thus has forgotten the question of desirability. We have seen that in Critias lie the seeds of justice: yet because he does not confront and transform the meddlesome impulse associated with these seeds, they have been growing into something other than true justice, that is, into competence or the interest in intelligence. Critias, instead of doing justice to a notion (e.g. the notion of temperance) seeks to define it, that is, to stipulate what it is in the manner of legal stipulation. "Sophrosyne I define in plain words", he says, "to be the doing of good actions" (163e). Critias' style of argument is modelled on that of the lawyer who engages in a debate in which to make a point is to score a point. When refuted by Socrates on his definition, he suddenly switches to a new definition unconnected with the previous one. He tells Socrates:

"My object is to leave the previous discussion (in which I know not whether you or I are more right, but, at any rate, no clear result was attained), and to raise a new one in which I will attempt to prove, if you deny it, that sophrosyne is self-knowledge" (165a-b).

Critias wants to cancel the earlier discussion because as he conceives it, he lost a point: he "will not be ashamed to acknowledge that (he) made a mistake" (154d), because in this way he will cut his losses. Thus we see that Critias' interest in competence and intelligibility resonates with a basic instrumentalism in him.



Justice is intimately related to making visible, giving shape, giving recognizable and tangible form<sup>10</sup>. To do justice to self or other requires objectification, for in the absence of this, there is no basis for evaluation. The interest in objectification lends itself to justice whereas vagueness or hiddenness makes the practice of judgement impossible. So we can say that objectification is oriented, at least implicitly, to the Desire for justice, whereas the oracular or the mystical is indifferent to justice<sup>11</sup>. The speaker who begins with a disposition to objectify seems to have a certain incipient Desire for justice. The problem is that this disposition tends to begin in intemperance, that is, as a kind of meddlesomeness, a desire to be definitive: in short, an interest in "how things look" which has not yet gone beyond an interest in reputation. Academics, critics, and Critias, all think that what will make or break them is their reputation. Since their business is objectifying and giving definitive shape to recalcitrant matters, they know only too well that they too are objectified and given definitive shape. To orient to a reputation is to treat oneself as recalcitrant - i.e. subject to definition and intelligibility.

Socrates' aim in his conversation with Critias is to temper his embryonic Desire for justice so that it can begin to mature itself. As we shall see, Critias needs to particularize by learning to objectify what is worthy or valuable. At this moment, his tendency, as we have seen, is to overlook worth in favour of terminology. His nascent justice is turning into exegesis rather than genuine objectification.

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10. In Chapter Four, we shall strengthen this into the notion of particularizing, and seek to show the temperance of particularization. See also the account of Garfinkel and his desire to "make commonplace scenes visible". Garfinkel will emerge as a modern version of the Critian interest in justice as competence and intelligence.

11. In our final chapter, we shall see (through the example of Charmides) how it actually courts injustice.



Socrates will seek to introduce him to what is desirable rather than merely possible or intelligible.

To say that Critias needs to invite Desire into his talk is not to say that his speech merely lacks Desire altogether. Rather, Desire is transformed into wish or volition: it becomes the desire for reputation and recognition. We recall Critias' boastful pride in Charmides, who is "of the same house" as himself. Desire in Critias' discourse (the discourse of competence) can only live the transfigured life of the desire for self-aggrandizement. The reason for this development, or the basis for its occurrence, begins to emerge now in Critias' notion of temperance. Sophrosyne, he says "(is alone) a science of other sciences and of itself"(166c). Now this resonates perfectly with his interest in competence and definitiveness. A definition, in the Critian sense, provides its own standards: it does not rely on anything outside itself. To define is to stipulate: for example, the existentialist says we must define the meaning of our lives, by which he means we must stipulate its meaning by providing the standards on which it is based. To provide the standards is to set them down: notice the legalistic resonances again here. For Critias, sophrosyne is the only science that provides its own standards, because it knows itself and requires nothing outside itself. Critias' Desire turns into a desire for itself (rather than a Desire for the good or excellent) because he will not acknowledge anything except the self. He will not acknowledge sophrosyne's need (or Desire) for a standard. He collapses sophrosyne's Desire into itself.

To begin the education of Critias' Desire, to draw him from the intemperance of sheer meddling, will require the turning of this Desire away from itself towards what it is for, towards its standard

or good. Socrates begins to address this when he says to Critias, about various sciences, that "I can show you that each of these sciences has a subject which is different from the science"(166a). For example, the science of computation takes its standard, not from itself, but from the nature of all the various numbers with which it deals. The study of politics, Socrates might have said, takes its standard, not from itself, but from the nature of the polis itself. Socrates is telling Critias that knowledge is not merely a matter of definition or invention, but is somehow an act of self-transcendence. The knower must achieve his unity with the known by going beyond what is immediate to him (his self-identity), rather than merely assuming his unity, or (as in Critias' case), defining or stipulating it. Knowledge requires us to dwell with our object rather than uproot it: that is, it requires temperance. It requires us to develop our Desire to meet its standard. Critias needs to let go of himself so as to allow himself to inquire. Letting go of himself means: loosening his hold on his own definition of himself. How can Socrates introduce Critias to the temperance he needs?

In the dialogue, Socrates takes the risk of seeming to indulge Critias. He contends with Critias, debates with him, becomes immersed in the problems associated with the notion of a science of science. He risks - perhaps intemperately - getting caught in the whirlpool of Critian abstractions. Worse still, he indulges Critias by conceding arguments to him for the sake of discussion. "Let us assume", he says, "that this science of science is possible" (169d). He gives Critias his head and in effect, fills his sails for him. Is this not the exact opposite of what is required? Why encourage Critias when it seems that this must make him more intemperate?

Instead of only resisting Critias, and inviting only his resistance in return, Socrates also risks indulging him - in order to invite him to experience his Desire for justice as requiring a standard. Socrates "concedes" the question of possibility to Critias ("let us assume that this science of science is possible") in order to have Critias confront the question: is sheer possibility truly Desirable? Having granted the assumption to Critias, Socrates questions the desirability of the "science of science". To Critias, this question has never occurred before. Competence or intelligence is automatically desirable to Critias: the only issue for him, up to this point, is whether it is possible. Critias, then, is amazed at Socrates' question, and at Socrates for raising the question. "How very strange" (172e), he exclaims on hearing it. This is a new departure for Critias.

For the first time, Critias is provoked to reflection by something strange and enigmatic. Socrates can explain and develop what he means, yet Critias has no idea what it will be. That is, although Socrates is not being oracular (and hence indifferent to justice), Critias is unable to anticipate what Socrates will say. Critias is unable to deal competently with the situation by being intelligent: this challenges him to re-consider his notions of knowledge and understanding. Critias realizes that knowledge and understanding are useless without Desire.

When Socrates agrees that the "science of science" is a strange notion of dubious value, Critias at last allows his Desire to voice itself. He asks: "What do you mean? I wish that you could make me understand what you mean" (173a). Critias comes to grasp his need for education: he comes to see that intelligence per se is not self-sufficient. He realizes that, in the words of Homer quoted by Socrates,

he is a "needy man". He must learn to Desire what he truly needs.

Sheer possibility resonates with supreme competence or efficiency. If the science of science is possible, and is actually given sway over us, Socrates says, "then each action will be done according to the arts and sciences" (173a). Mankind will live according to knowledge:

"Our health will be improved; our safety at sea, and also in battle, will be assured; our coats and shoes and all other instruments and implements will be skilfully made" (173b-c).

Society will be efficiently organized and intelligence will rule. Yet none of this will in the least ensure that "we shall act well and be happy" (173d). All of the competence and efficiency in the world leaves untouched the question of the desirability of such a life.

In one sense, such a society would be just. Perfect exegesis would have been realized: clarity of definition, total specification of meaning and complete removal of equivocation, would have been brought about. The goal of Wittgenstein's Tractatus would have been achieved. As a result, the disagreement among men so feared by Hobbes, and diagnosed by him as having its source in the ambiguity of our concepts, would disappear. The liberal goal of distributive justice and ascription on merit would be attained.

The persuasiveness of the exegetic version of justice is beautifully illustrated in O'Casey's play, The Shadow of a Gunman. Davoren is thought by everybody to be a gunman in hiding, with a great deal of influence in the I.R.A. A small delegation visits him in order to present him with a letter written by one of its number - a letter demanding justice in a domestic matter. Its opening will illustrate our point.

"Mr. Gallogher (reading):

"I wish to call your attention to the persecution me and my family has to put up with in respect of and appertaining to the residents of the back drawing-room of the house known as fifty-five, Saint Teresa Street, situate in the Parish of St. Thomas, in the Borough and City of Dublin. This persecution started eighteen months ago - or to be precise - on the tenth day of the sixth month, in the year nineteen hundred and twenty"." 12

In order to put his case, the author feels it necessary to copy the style of the legal document. The letter is full of bureaucratic turns of phrase. What makes it ridiculous, of course, is the incongruity of this style with the triviality of the matter and the humble rank of its author. Yet the ridiculous character of Gallogher is precisely the opposite of Critias' ludicrousness. What they share is a notion of justice as intelligence or exegesis. Yet Gallogher is incapable of carrying it off because he does not genuinely subscribe to it (though he imagines that he does and presents himself accordingly). In his humble simplicity, he is naive but not pretentious. The absurd competence of his letter is simply, for him, a format for the expression of its real subject matter. That he chooses this format shows us that his problem is that he takes the Critian project seriously. Critias' problem, on the other hand, is that he does not take Gallogher's Desire for justice, obscured as it is in its ridiculous and ill-fitting pedanticism, seriously enough. Critias is ludicrous, not, as Gallogher is, for failing absurdly (and likably) at being exegetic, but in the far deeper sense of imagining that exegesis is self-sufficient.

Critias' request that Socrates teach him is made possible by his realization that, although, in the eyes of some, he may be able to carry off a display of competence, he has not achieved genuine self-mastery.

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12. O'Casey, 1957, p.98.

That this is so had, in fact, surfaced earlier in his display of anger at Charmides. Socrates tells us that when Charmides went on pointing out that Critias had been refuted,

"Critias grew angry, and appeared, as I thought, inclined to quarrel with him; just as a poet might quarrel with an actor who spoiled his poems in reciting them" (162d).

We can see here that Critias' anger is not so much a genuine Desire for justice as an instance of the attachment to self and self's offspring. Critias' anger is more like rage. Rather than exemplifying self-mastery, it simply asserts his competence. To teach Critias, we need to provide a notion of the desirability of self-mastery, as being more valuable than the sheer intelligence of competence.

In his commitment to intelligence, Critias is certainly resourceful. He artfully uses the skills of argument to generate offspring and make himself visible. He might reply to us at this point by saying, in his sardonic way: what, are you about to strip me of my resources and leave me with nothing but a barren Desire? Am I simply to renounce all of my talent and all of my artfulness? If we are to convince Critias, we will need to provide him with a notion of resourcefulness: the resourcefulness of Desire rather than competence. What is the temperance required by Critias if he is to mature the seeds of his justice?

## CHAPTER FOUR

SPIRIT AND INHERITANCE1. Justice's need for spirit.

With Socrates, Kierkegaard remarks, "the outer and the inner did not form a harmonious unity". "What Socrates said meant something 'other'", hence, "not even his contemporaries could grasp him in his immediacy".<sup>1</sup> Kierkegaard's anger towards Socrates is thus a demand for immediacy, or that the external and the internal form a "harmonious unity". Now this is an observational version of unity: it seeks the co-incidence of what "appears" and what is "real" as if the former were "the visible" and the latter "the invisible". Reality, in this observer's utopia, would become immediate because it would become directly apparent (visible). However, we can deepen the notion of immediacy here by re-formulating anger as the demand that the orientation of principle be made into something immediate. Strongly, anger wants the speaker's interest in value to be expressive of him, something he embodies, affirms, and develops. This recalls us to the analysis of the interest in self-expression in the previous chapter. Anger as the Desire for justice requires temperance: that is, genuine self-expression, or immediacy oriented to worth. It is the nature of this quality of temperance that we must now pursue, using as our example the immediacy of anger. We shall ask: how can anger moderate and educate its desire for immediacy?

Earlier, we said that anger is the demand for trust: anger is the passion that allows us to give voice in the face of what could silence the human voice altogether, namely the betrayal of trust. The worst betrayal here would not be of interactional trust between concrete

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1. Kierkegaard, 1968, p.50.



individuals, but of the trust in speech, reason, logos itself as discourse, that permits oriented courses of action and interaction to take place. Now this enables us to say: the particular value towards which anger (strongly) is oriented is the value of friendship. Anger is grounded in the Desire to befriend conditions. The befriending of conditions requires the trust that they will not consume us, and anger we now grasp as our immediate response to the betrayal of this trust.<sup>2</sup>

Our inquiry seeks now to deliver anger of its promise by inducing its best. All of the foregoing has referenced anger's need to express its best: its desire to achieve conviction, to find a character for itself, to find what truly compels it. In short, anger must realize its Desire for justice by educating itself into temperance. In order to become convinced of its commitment to worth (suggested in the notion of the demand for trust) anger needs to speak it, to give its account, to give it a life, a vision and a visibility. Anger needs to become positive, to find its compelling usage through which it can realize its strength of character, so that it can take its place as truly belonging within a commitment to the life of value. Our present need, then, is to inquire into the life of trust. We develop our grasp of the point of anger (its demand for trust) by inquiring into the strength of trust. We ask: why is trust strongly required?

Let's consider once again the notion of anger's struggle against the betrayal of trust. The speaker who betrays a trust denies what has been entrusted to him. He misuses it, that is, he uses it for purposes that fail to live up to or do credit to its best ends. This can resonate with examples of individuals who abuse things that others concretely

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2. Whereas anger sustains trust, rage and remorse are instances of its betrayal.

have given to them, but also, and more deeply, it makes reference to the speaker who betrays his resources in language and tradition.

The speaker who is in touch with resource seeks to live up to it as something with which he has been entrusted, not by this or that man, but by the source itself in its desire to find self-expression. The source itself desires to maintain and strengthen the contact (mediation) between speech and source. When resource imagines that the source needs it, it loves its work, because now its work gives source its means of influencing the practice and pursuit of social courses of action. The work of resource becomes available to itself as a strong requirement. So the ideal speaker trusts resource by furthering the work it loves through his talk and activities. He does this by articulating the work of resource as the work of sustaining its contact with its true need. Resource deeply needs to re-collect source: it must satisfy this need in speech, by endowing speech with its gift, since speech is the practice, modus vivendi, or vehicle of expression through which man's essential capacity for remembering his source (i.e. the source of all) is enacted. Resource enables speech to enact the capacity to re-collect source.

Speakers are perennially tempted to allow themselves to be distracted by their "own" resourcefulness. An instance of resource is, of course, mastery of anger. Mastery is the resource that enables anger to overcome the extremes of rage and remorse. Anger's struggle with trust, then, is not simply an external matter - a struggle simply in the face of conditions, circumstances, or chance challenges - but is essentially and necessarily internal to its character, and its work of living up to its character. The question of trust is anger's fate because it is the question around which anger must orient so as

to live up to its fate. Trust is integral to anger because in order to become part of the just speech it has to itself live up to the resource that is essentially entrusted to it: self-mastery.

When anger pursues this work, submits itself to what it needs. it thereby schools or prepares itself for integration within the speech that is oriented to value. Anger becomes a demand for trust by educating itself to be a display of trust, that is, to display the capacity to use the resource of mastery for the sake of the end or value for which it is fitted. Anger's work is to make mastery answer to its need, as anger's resource, to develop the speaker's collectedness with the source of his speech.

The joy of resource is its particularization of our indebtedness to language, its shaping and building work of making this recollection speakable and thus sustainable, capable of being given and received, shaped and enjoyed. Resource, through its activity of forming and building gives the speaker a home to live in within the world of conditions. Resource particularizes the interest in ends, or value, and so gives that interest a place within the multis of interests, concerns and pursuits with which it cohabits and the source of which it seeks to re-collect.

Mastery of anger particularizes in one way the essential concern speech has for the problem of value. In the absence of particularization, such "essential concern" remains unconvincing, difficult to show or make compelling for an auditor. Objections against the idea of the "essential concern" would succeed in confusing and silencing the theorist, since he would be unable to bring any passion to bear on the issue of what is compelling about the "essential concern".

Particularization is not intended here as a mere device for agreement, since it never guarantees the winning over of the sceptic to the idea of "essential concern.". Rather, particularization gives the theorist a way of developing his committed character, his passionate interest, instead of simply being faithful in an abstract way to "what is essential". It enables him to live up to the demand of source by giving voice to that demand. Since the "essential concern" can only shine through the particular usage, instance, or practice, the task for inquiry is to particularize itself so as to enable this to take place. Where sheer concreteness simply amasses detail, fact, or observation, thus stultifying inquiry, the opposite (the sheer "essential concern") turns out to be equally fatal for the conversation.

Mastery of anger particularizes speech's essential concern for worth by serving as the resource through which this essential concern re-establishes itself within speech, i.e. as a concern that actually speaks. Anger, we said, is the integration of force and potential. On the one hand, potential without force, i.e. remorse, resonates with the absence of particularization which segregates the "essential concern" from the life and passion of speech. Remorse is unable to use the "essential concern" to distinguish what needs to be said from what doesn't, what is worth saying from what isn't - that is, to value or give distinction to conversation. It is incapable of using or realizing value. This shows us the remorseful character of negative irony: for it is an irony that empties out all positive, substantive, content (i.e. all particularity) and posits an absolute, or an idea, determined only negatively or by implication. On the other hand force without potential, i.e. rage, suggests the notion of sheer multiplicity of usage, or the enforcability of convention. Rage, sheer rule of physiology or many-

ness, forgets value: the only possible values are those imposed subsequently by the will (over self) or the tyrant (over the community).

Now it is emerging that the negative ironist has a way of orienting to particularity that is peculiar to, and very characteristic of, him. He will take any topic - without feeling compelled by it - and, for reasons that are intimately connected with this, will tend to examine and delineate the value or worth it is capable of by limiting it in terms of its excesses<sup>3</sup>. Because the negative ironist does not find his topic compelling, i.e. does not develop a sense of character through it, he finds it difficult to make positive formulations, but instead tends to identify the phenomenon in terms of its outer limits. Simmel, in an essay entitled "Sociability", sets out the challenge for us. He initially discusses the limits of his phenomenon. He says, "One can... speak of an upper and lower sociability threshold for the individual". What these thresholds are need not concern us here. Then he goes on to say:

"From this negative definition of the nature of sociability through boundaries and thresholds, however, one can perhaps find the positive motif".<sup>4</sup>

For Simmel, to talk of a phenomenon through its limits is to characterize it negatively; and in this sense of limits, as "boundaries and thresholds", he is right. For Simmel, an interest in a phenomenon's limit is a negative interest, a reserved speech that does not say anything positive on its own account. Given this conception, the problem would be, how does the theorist move on to develop a positive interest? Neither Simmel nor Kierkegaard can grasp how this movement can be made. For Simmel, out

3. An example would help here. Take the notion of style: in inquiring after a good or strong version of style, the negative ironist might say, "sheer style is merely oriented to appearance, whereas the absence of style is indifferent about appearance, i.e. terse and unconversational. So the value of style lies in the mean or measure between these two excesses". If nothing more were said, this would simply be what Kierkegaard would call a "negative determination."
4. Simmel, 1971, p.132.

of the negative definition, "one can perhaps find the positive motif". Thus, while he is prepared to acknowledge some kind of movement of questioning, in the absence of any further work, the nature of this movement is of course left hopelessly vague. Kierkegaard, on the other hand, is unwilling to acknowledge that any such movement is possible at all. Commenting on the difference between Book One of the Republic and the subsequent books of the same work, he insists that between the former and the latter there is a total break. The subsequent books do not really develop Book One, but rather, what

"must not be lost sight of" is "the great difference between the first book and those that follow, the fact that the second book begins all over again, begins from the beginning". 5

We could ask Kierkegaard to consider a number of factors that suggest an alternative reading. For example, why does Plato write a single dialogue called the Republic, if Book Two is really a new beginning? Clearly he means to suggest a unity underlying the various differences. Again, even though a new beginning is suggested through the replacement of Thrasymachos by Glaucon and Adeimantos, and by Socrates' admission at the end of Book One that "the whole conversation has left me completely in the dark" (354b), on the other hand, when Glaucon and Adeimantos speak, they do not "begin from the beginning", but they develop Thrasymachos' talk. Why does Kierkegaard not turn his attention in this direction, since it suggests that the development of a positive irony is, after all, possible? Yet, merely asking Kierkegaard to attend to these points that emerge in the course of the inquiry does not make available a sense of the reasons why we want to do so.

To seek the unity of a discourse is to ask what limits it rather than to delineate the "limits" within it. It is worth noting that this

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5. Kierkegaard, 1968. p.148. Kierkegaard's notion of a total break seems to anticipate Althusser!



requires the trust that ideal speaking is possible: here, this means a speaking that orients decisively to what limits it. Ideal speaking is speaking that gives expression to what is truly compelling in the particular instance. The particularity of its orientation is stronger than the particularism of rage: instead it seeks to express value through the particular. What notion of speech does this require?

Speech is always and necessarily a thing in that on every occasion, it could be otherwise; it has characteristics that belong to it contingently rather than essentially or necessarily. Yet the idea of speech is always the same, i.e. the idea of speech is necessarily unlike its opposite<sup>6</sup>. What belongs centrally or essentially to speech (as its idea) is its capacity to recall us to the idea, to consideration of what is essentially what it is, of what is essentially limited by what it is not. Now we can ask: what is essential to speech? It belongs essentially to speech that through it we have the capacity to call on resource so as to re-collect the source of our speech. That this capacity belongs essentially to speech means that it belongs to the idea of speech. Speech as a thing is charged with the task of living up to what it truly is: that is, it needs to show an interest in its idea, i.e. in the source of its value. Speech's Desire to dwell with its idea expresses itself through its disciplined work of caring for the ideas that animate and illuminate its topics, usages and examples. Speech draws near to what it strongly is (its idea) by showing how it respects the ideas that animate it in any particular instance, rather than simply collecting a chance gathering of images, usages, or propositions. Through the orientation to limit (the idea, rather than the thing) speech returns its gratitude for that with which it has been entrusted: the capacity to summon resource in order to call upon value,

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6. A.Blum, 1978 pp.73-4. As explicated by Blum a thing could be such or otherwise it is what it happens to be whereas an idea is limited by its opposite. by what is essentially unlike it.



to call value to attend upon us. Speech becomes temperate through the development of resources that befriend conditions and recall value.

Now we can formulate how anger is grounded in its interest in value. The passion for value is the passion that has anger as one of its possible expressions. Anger is evoked for the sake of reminding us of the need to justify being entrusted with resources. Neglect, or the betrayal of trust, results in the wasting of speech's resource, i.e. of its capacity to orient to notions, ideas and limits.

The Desire to develop resources that befriend conditions and recall value is the Desire of spirit. Spirit is the passion to develop the orientation that particularizes and gives body (or substance) to the theorist's "essential concern". Particularizing, giving body, are ways of making reference to the passion of the theorist for his talk. The theorist Desires to be genuinely moved by the compelling source that originates and gathers together the themes or the ideas, within his talk. We formulate spirit, then, as the theorist's passion to particularize value, to enact resource. Since anger in its strongest sense is an expression of spirit, anger needs to be mastered as its way of living up to its idea as such an expression.

The passion for value essentially wants to keep resource - the orientation to notions, limits, ideas, as our way of mediating source and speech - alive. The question of worth or value, i.e. of our collectedness with the source of our speech and action, is a question that we are required to participate in. The notion of being a participant, rather than a passive recipient, or a worshiper of the text, resonates with a desire to be involved with rather than outside the

limit. Desiring to be involved with the limit means having the spirit to treat the pursuit of inquiry into ideas as our means of participating in and thus keeping alive the questions "what is worthy?" or "what is valuable?". Instead of seeking the detachment of being outside of the limit, the participant seeks involvement with limit as his means of resolving the question of value by bringing it to life within speech itself. He seeks to make his involvement with essential limits answer to the life that is spirited and truly expressive. "Expressive" now means: developing the resourceful renewal of the collectedness of speech and its source.

At the heart of spirit is its commitment to keep alive within speech its collectedness with its source. That is, spirit does not want the source or origin of speech to retreat and be forgotten, but instead to resourcefully integrate within speech our dependence on the source. Now, what kind of commitment is spirit, the passion for value, such that it takes part in the recollection of grounds? What part does it play? Spirit, we said, is the passion to involve speech with value: that is, to bring to expression the ideas and notions within talk, rather than to restrict it to sheer description or chance effect. Now, spirit must ask: how does this passion for value place the speaker inside that which gathers and shelters all, i.e. source or language? How does the pursuit of ideas and notions fulfil the desire to participate, the desire to treat source as something that essentially needs the work of recollection?

Even the most dispersive speech is gathered within language: yet, what makes it dispersive is that it is heedless of how it is gathered by source. An interest in the idea of dispersiveness requires us to consider what essentially limits it. The idea of dispersiveness

is limited by its opposite, the idea of decisiveness. Thus, while even dispersive speech is part of the whole, only decisive speech exercises the capacity to say this? Placing the self inside that which shelters and gathers all (including dispersive talk, talk that orients to survival or circumstance rather than value) requires the exercise of decisiveness. It requires the decision to orient to the distinction between dispersiveness and decisiveness. This decision is the beginning of spirit, of the passion for limit. So the passion for limit needs to remember the relationship between the dispersive and the decisive in order to initiate the particularization of the theorist's interest. Of course, to forget the distinction is to generate many-ness or difference rather than particularity. Yet, crucially, to treat decisiveness as segregated from dispersiveness, because it is forgotten that dispersiveness is also gathered by language, is to seek to secure decisiveness as a purified guarantee rather than to re-create decisiveness in the midst of usage. Because it loses the passion of decisiveness, segregation is incapable of achieving particularity. It is unspirited will rather than spirited resourcefulness.

Decisiveness, or the enactment of spirit, initiates particularization because it seeks to rule manyness, not externally, from outside and above, but by inviting manyness to participate in recollecting its source. Decisiveness does not, like exegesis, seek to regulate usage, by bureaucratizing the relations between its parts, by dictating the rules of its enforceability. This is to treat usage as the whole, as everything: the theorist is seen merely as a collator, describing or explaining what already exists outside of him. Nor does decisiveness, like metaphysics, seek to be "free" from usage, through the invention of its own categories, divisions, schemes and programmes. This is to

regard usage as nothing, out of the misplaced fear that its manyness is merely threatening. Instead, decisiveness seeks to achieve the governance of speech by that which truly shelters and gathers it, language. It wants to persuade manyness that secretly, it is governed by language: it is always addressing and encountering usage, seeking through it to recollect the source that makes it intelligible. The work of theorizing is unending because any usage needs to be turned towards its grounds. Yet every usage is collected within source in particular ways, so the theorist does not adopt a merely indifferent relation to "all usage". The theorist exercises decisiveness as the passion to re-call source through the required enactment of resource within speech: that is, he exercises decisiveness in response to the demand for particularization.

Spirit is the passion to exercise the true decisiveness that participates in the relationship between speech and language through speaking. Being decisive towards the distinction between decisiveness and dispersiveness allows the particularization of the theorist's interest to emerge as the fruit of his willingness to participate. Willingness to participate means, continuously seeking to re-achieve decisiveness within the multitude of practices and topics he engages in. The theorist needs the fertility of spirit to exercise decisiveness in the midst of the (as yet) indecisive. The theorist needs the mastered anger of spirit, not as a response against threats to his own survival or well-being, but as yet another way of inviting usage to reorient itself to the source. Mastered anger is a means of serving the interest of spirit because it seeks to re-call dispersiveness in the face of its tendency to profligacy, to speak in ways that would neglect the possibility of resourceful talk. Yet it re-calls disper-

siveness to its source: that is, it does not merely orient wilfully to usage by segregating it from its source. Spirit is resourceful because through it, we inherit our resources as valuable (oriented to value). So the theorist is the one for whom anger is the demand that he re-affirm (or re-enact) resourcefulness in the face of its neglect (in sheer usage) or its formalization (in abstraction).

Mastery seeks to do justice to anger's grounds in spirit: it seeks to recollect, in the midst of the potentially dispersive occasion of anger, neither to give way to it, nor to merely censor it, but to use it to re-achieve decisiveness. Mastery is thus an instance of the relation to usage sought after by spirit, since it initiates the particularization that rage and remorse both sacrifice. The limit or opposite of the idea of mastery is the idea of slavery. We can treat the outcome of the speaker's failure to re-achieve mastery as one or other of two versions of slavery. Rage, the first version, is an enslavement of passion to the merely physiological, to the cycle of retribution, to self-degeneration. Being "enslaved to the passions" means, more deeply, being enslaved to a weak version of the passions. True passion, mastery, seeks to give the body, usage, and accident, their place within the whole. Remorse is the second version of slavery because its consequence, as we have elaborated, is the absence of character or particularization. Lack of a voice or a character resonates with slavery not only to draw on Hegel's argument, because it prevents the possibility of recognition but more deeply, because, lacking passion, it generates detachment or indifference. Notice that this is precisely the problem for Hegel's "master". Since for this master the relation to other is one of external domination (in our terms, the master is not a participant), the result as Hegel develops

it resonates with our notion of remorse. Hegel's master is a remorseful, guilty speaker without passion or self-particularization. This results from the exercise of a "mastery" that externalizes itself from its other, the slave<sup>8</sup>.

## 2. The deep speaker as inheritor.

It is time for us to develop a stronger notion of the ideal speaker, the speaker for whom spirit, the passion for limit, is an essential ingredient of his talk. In terms of what we have said in this chapter up to now, our ideal speaker seeks to make his speech participate in re-animating the question of value or source. He seeks to speak resourcefully, that is, to exercise resource in order to put speech in touch with its source. The idea that best captures our sense of what he is, is the notion that he is interested in depth. He is interested in deepening what is said (by himself or by others). In developing it, in refreshing and renewing speech's capacity for resourcefulness<sup>9</sup>. Deep or resourceful speaking seeks to re-open inquiry at a level where it is empowered to give access to the problem of worth or value. The deep speaker seeks to make conversation dwell at the demanding but rewarding level where inquiry is given back its freshness. Essentially, the ideal speaker desires to socialize the experience of knowledge as something compelling, by sharing it in conversation with others. The deep speaker wants to treat the problem of worth or value, not as a matter of generalized, categorical, "knowledge" that is shared indifferently by all because it is external to each, nor as a matter of private, unshareable and hence indisputable.

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8. For Hegel's account of the master-slave dialectic see Hegel, 1949, pp.228-240.

9. I owe much of the thinking behind the present discussion to the work group in which I participated at the Conference on Theorizing held at Perugia, Italy, in August 1979: in particular to Leslie Miller who so fruitfully collected the group's work in the notion of the deep speaker.

"experience". He acknowledges the problem of worth as one that requires, in order to be pursued in a way proper to it, the speaker's participation: it cannot be treated either as "internal" or "external" to the speaker, for the problem in both cases is that the speaker is used as an unquestioned reference point. Both "solutions" have already (secretly) settled the problem of value, since they treat the speaker, the "subject", in the one case as supremely valuable, in the other as supremely detrimental to value. For the deep speaker, the dichotomy between "knowledge" and "experience" is precisely a consequence of a superficial notion of both. Deepened, they are no longer segregated.

Yet, the deep speaker is tempted to forget spirit.

How can this be - since he is interested in refreshing speech's resourcefulness, that is, its capacity to re-call value?

The deep speaker is tempted to disregard whatever is contingent, secondary, non-essential, subject to casual laws and so on. Because of his Desire to say and do what is worthwhile, he tends to find contingent or caused things superficial and boring. In this sense he tends to overpopulate his world with enemies: he is intolerant of all instances of talk that ignore the demand to display interest in worth.

The deep speaker might find in the words of poets sentiments with which he can agree and in which he can seek consolation. Wordsworth touches a chord in this speaker, when he writes.

"The world is too much with us; late and soon,  
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers". 10

Or he might become like Gerard Manly Hopkins, of whom it was written that (characteristic of him was) "a refusal to accept the (merely)

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10. Wordsworth, 1935, p.122.



notional. the tendency to act, both privately and publicly, as if out of a state of emergency".<sup>11</sup>

The deep speaker because of the very intensity of his desire has a tendency to turn the question of worth into a matter of life and death. That is, he could mistreat the notion of being compelled by the question, by turning the compelling into an imposition, something externally given, rather than something he participates in. Instead of the pleasure and enjoyment of participation, he becomes consumed by the question, "am I worthy?" or "am I capable of living up to the compelling question?" Whereas he wants to be animated by the work of particularizing his interest, and seeking what is compelling in it, instead he becomes self-preoccupied, centred on the question of self-identity, and the mere survival of his own capacity to sustain the problem of worth. Tragically, sustaining the problem of worth becomes weakened into the obsessiveness of sustaining his self-identity. It becomes a kind of endurance test.

The deep speaker experiences the temptation to turn away, in his "refusal to accept the notional", from those things that are resistant to value, the things that embody what is partly inert - for example, the passions, or sheer enthusiasm for particular things, or convention. These things, he argues, merely accept a notion of what-they-are and of what their purpose is. Therefore, they are only what they happen to be: they have not deeply chosen to be what they are, but simply find themselves in a given condition that has been caused by unknown and unquestioned origins. Neither passion nor enthusiasm, nor convention, know or care where they have come from: they simply carry on, like bad actors thrown onstage from the wings, in whatever direction they are

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11. W.Davies, Introduction to G.H.Hopkins, 1979, pp14-15.

already moving. The deep speaker is tempted to hate the enthusiasm of self-display, or the assurance of convention that rests on the failure to question itself. He is tempted to collect these examples in a notion of self-exegesis. He resents the forcefulness of what he calls self-exegesis because he considers it undeserved and unjustified: all it does is self-description, enumeration and display of preference.

What he calls self-exegesis is the rule of sheer upbringing, the self-celebration of the arbitrary: upbringing gone wild. At this degree of corruption by his temptations, the deep speaker takes on the tone of rancour that we hear in the poet's or the Christian's complaints against "men of the world". It is the shallowness of self-exegesis, of course, that makes it objectionable to the deep speaker. He looks upon it as a form of cheating, an opting for the easy way: to make matters worse. For him, this is the way that seems to have inherited the world. Now it is the weight of this rancour, rather than, as he thinks, the weight of the world, that turns the deep speaker away from the "world" and towards the inwardness of his own soul. Ironically, the one who sees the world as being populated by cheats comes to be seen (sometimes justly) as taking the easy way out, not trying, not bothering to talk, and so on. He comes to be seen as unjust.<sup>12</sup>

One crucial thing our speaker has forgotten is that the shallow version of having a place, giving a life to passion, namely self-exegesis, doesn't really inherit anything except in an equally weak sense. It fails to inherit resource, that is, the capacity to enjoy the worth of its decisions. Instead of forcing the deep speaker to renounce anything, self-exegesis ought to be another incentive for him to invoke spirit, or his passion to give a place to worth and

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12. The genesis of temperance in a kind of injustice will be addressed in our final chapter).

value in speech. It is what needs to be affirmed (spirit) that is truly compelling, not what needs to be renounced (self-exegesis). Again it is ironic that the deep speaker who succumbs to his excess is more compelled by the idea of renouncing something that he regards as external (both to him, and to the question of value) rather than centering himself on the affirmation of spirit, of that which is his real contact with worth. This suggests that there is a fatal equivocation which seeks to gain admission to the deep speaker's enterprise and which, if it does, will decisively weaken it.

The question is this: does self-exegesis generate particularity and character in such a way that it inherits anything worth inheriting? Failure to resolve this issue results in the deep speaker's insecurity about his chosen commitment, with the danger this brings that his passion could turn sour, or vacuous: he could become limited to remorse, hope, or nostalgia.

To actively inherit something means to make it one's own. One's genuine inheritance is not merely property or culture or material resources, but the relation to tradition bespoken by the notion of "making the resources one's own". Inheriting is the opposite of alienation in that, by transforming something estranged and external into something friendly, it fosters participation i.e. the re-enlivening and exercising of resources. Notice that it's not that inheriting turns the external into the internal - that would be the property-ownership version - but that the external is transformed into something that is participated in. Participating in something shows that we belong to it, and that it belongs to us because we allow ourselves to belong to it. Now, what is truly worth inheriting is resource as the capacity to call on the best in the tradition. Resource, to remind ourselves, is the means of

re-enacting the passion to re-discover anew every time the belonging of speech with its source or value. Spirit needs to inherit this resource. Let's ask now: what does self-exegesis or sheer enthusiasm inherit? What it inherits is a self. Self we re-call (Chapter 2) does not have to mean the individual ego: analytically it means that which is familiar, the set of particulars with which one identifies. Self-exegesis has inherited a self in this sense: that it can dynamically activate the various parts of this self in a speaking relationship, that the whole self is integrated yet the parts within it are distinct, and that this structure is both sustained by, and at the same time, permits, the speaker's participation with the self.

Yet, this self, since it is founded on familiarity, has a weak sense of value or limit. Its limits are accidental, sheer matters of upbringing and circumstance: so it is always ready to become enraged, to make war on different selves. The mildest form of this war is the conflict of opinion by which multis is animated.

The deep speaker must overcome the temptation merely to renounce the "conflict of opinion". The failure of self-exegesis to inherit what is truly worth inheriting, that is, resource, does not mean that it inherits nothing. Self-exegesis, sheer enthusiasm, the acceptance and use of what one happens to think good as if it were good, does not inherit resource because it is uninterested in re-enacting the question of worth. But its disinterest is not the result of mere animosity, but more of blindness or the desire not to lose what it has inherited. Self-exegesis, because it already has something going for itself, something that it finds rewarding, thinks that it has the answer to the question of value. Above all it is wary of the remorseful speaker, the speaker who remembers the idea of value but is in-

capable of giving it particular expression. This speaker could only disinherit self-exegesis. It is for this reason that self-exegesis is the deep speaker's greatest challenge and greatest risk. Self-exegesis is precisely what most tempts the deep speaker to become remorseful, to merely renounce opinion: and self-exegesis is also what most requires of him that he remember his strengths. In the face of the partial inheritance enacted by self-exegesis (or sheer enthusiasm), the deep speaker must remember rather than forget the idea of inheritance. This is a crucial phase or moment for the deep speaker: in the face of weakened versions of what is strongly desirable, he must overcome the impulse to be merely negative (i.e. give up on the idea) but instead, sustain and re-invigorate the idea (here, of inheritance) all the more strongly. That is, he must recover his passion for the particular worth of the idea, his passion for its limits: he must re-call his spirit in and through his speech.

Spirit enables the deep speaker to remember that self-exegesis inherits something in that it constructs the possibility for participation. It belongs to what it loves and what it loves belongs to it: thus it achieves recognizable character, the character of a self. The task for the deep speaker in conversing with self-exegesis is, not to disinherit it, but to deepen its idea of inheritance. The ironic character of the relationship that the deep speaker seeks with self-exegesis amounts to this: the deep speaker does not think of himself as having (i.e. occupying) a "position" from which to accept or reject sheer enthusiasm, but rather, he seeks to engage enthusiasm without merely succumbing to it. In order to be properly qualified to seek conversation with self-exegesis, the deep speaker's irony must be positive, rather than negative. As we saw, merely negative irony

would be the irony expressed by remorse towards the sheer enthusiast: it could only fall on deaf ears, but worse, it could only be symptomatic of a weakening of the deep speaker's own interest in inheritance and resource. Positive irony resists the temptation to be offended by self-exegesis (since merely to be offended is to adopt an external position) but instead seeks to enter, develop and deepen the conversation about what self-exegesis thinks it knows.

To understand how the deep speaker might enter the conversation, or better, initiate it from within, we can ask: what is the self that achieves itself through self-exegesis? It is a particular integrated dynamic of familiar parts that enter and re-enter various combinations and relationships. The love of familiarity is the love of exploring this dynamic. The nature of the parts and the nature of the whole that collects them is not a topic: what excites the interest is the dynamic of the parts. The interest is in how the various parts of the recognizable world interact with each other. Self-exegesis treats the "how" of life, i.e. how to go about courses of action, and so on, as the central interest. Self-exegesis is grounded in its conventional orientation to limit as the interest in how one thing affects, causes, fits together with, or is incompatible with, another thing. Knowing the conventions is knowing the various relationships between things, and taste or "knowing what is proper", is putting the right things together and keeping the wrong things apart. Living tastefully means: applying this to life, considered as the most valuable of the various things. Self-exegesis has already settled the problem of value: the most valuable thing is life. Life is the value to which all the other parts are to be tuned or addressed. Life is the highest good, yet it is also the supreme familiarity, the thing that is most ours, the thing for



which death is the ultimate stranger or alien. Death is the most strange, mysterious and perplexing thing, because it is the opposite of the most friendly, familiar and known thing: and death is also the most inimical, monstrous, and undesirable thing, because it is the opposite of the most valuable thing. Life is the familiar good. Life is reassuring because it makes familiarity and value coincide. Life is the self of self-exegesis, the self that sustains self-assurance.

Life is understood by self-exegesis as the highest value (the most valuable thing) because of its inherent familiarity, and as the most friendly of all familiar things because it is inherently valuable. Life is the only thing to combine from the outset the inherently familiar with the inherently valuable. For self-exegesis, the good life is the immediate life. Life seeks to re-discover itself immediately in the things and forms through which it expresses itself. Now this means that the re-discovery, re-construction, and so on, that life engages in, its use of the things that it finds in its environment as instruments or vehicles of self-expression, must aim not to be a construction of anything additional but rather to be the re-construction of nature. Convention - as the re-construction of life - is treated as the mirror of nature: the "mediate" is a mere point-by-point translation of the immediate<sup>13</sup>.

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13. For a theoretic expression of this, see Rousseau's Essay on the Origin of Languages, 1966. Rousseau we take to be a good example of self-exegesis, because he represents its radical expression. Rousseau knows better than to blandly equate convention with nature, since there are many conventions but only one nature. Yet for him this only serves to show that most of (what passes for) convention is a foreign overlay on nature: a speech or an education and so on that directly expresses nature is however possible, and Rousseau devotes considerable energy to developing these possibilities. Yet the notion of re-achieving worth is banished in favour of that of re-constructing or recapitulating immediacy. Rousseau, or strong self-exegesis, thus represents the unorthodox conventionalism of seeking the conventions with which to encapsulate nature: where weak self-exegesis might be the orthodox conventionalism of assuming that the given conventions already do encapsulate nature. The latter is the "conventional" speaker in the ordinary usage: in these terms it is "unconventional" to create new conventions. We want to focus, however, on what the two have in common by calling them orthodox and unorthodox conventionalism.



For self-exegesis, it is life (rather than source or value) that needs to particularize itself: moreover, in such a way that its innate immediacy - the source of life's value - is not sacrificed or compromised. Self-exegesis orients to convention (either by creating one or following one) as if it were natural: that is, it seeks to make its speech directly and immediately self-expressive, and it seeks to sustain the claim that the particular usages, icons, and methods it instrumentalizes are merely derivations of inherent natural capacity.

Self-exegesis seeks particularity as the convention that most intimately expresses what is natural. When this is novel, the result is trend or fashion. When it becomes old, the result is politeness or staidness. The latter becomes formalized or ritualized, and loses its capacity to express the immediate (the natural). The dynamic of self-exegesis is its never-ending struggle against formalization, its constant pruning of the unnatural that inevitably accompanies even its most enlightened efforts.

Hence self-exegesis is blind to its own convention, because it is inside it. This is why we speak of "blind rage". Rage has no resource with which to converse with other particularities, since particularity is equated with convention, and other conventions are somehow "unnatural". Immediacy lives on the verge of becoming enraged with its interlocutor: the risk is more extreme the more orthodox a version of conventionalism is involved. Sophisticated, unorthodox, versions recommend tolerance towards what is "merely" conventional, those ossified conventions that have become empty forms or gestures out of touch with immediacy, but do not deserve to be taken seriously because they make no genuine claim to particularize (i.e. re-capitulate) immediacy. Every version, however, insists that these accretions, being non-natural,

although in some measure inevitable, be kept to an absolute minimum. Ideally, the "merely" conventional would disappear, and the "true" convention-that-isn't-really-a-convention would win universal adherence.

Convention conceives of itself as self-exegesis. That is, it conceives of itself naturalistically: it sees itself as a transcription of nature. We recall that in our Introduction, we analyzed negative irony's hatred of convention as originating in its notion that convention makes a bland truce with nature. That is, negative irony's hatred of convention stems from its hatred of nature. Here, a new development has occurred. We can grasp now that the alleged truce with nature is not, in fact, of convention's own making. Rather, it is the negative ironist's artifact: it is the negative ironist's view of convention's effective or realized relationship with nature. Convention's self-conception, as has now emerged, is very different: self-exegesis is no longer the truce of convention and nature, it is their identity. Self-exegesis understands itself as saying what it is natural to say or doing what it is natural to do. Garfinkel speaks of this self-understanding as one that finds its own reflexivity uninteresting<sup>14</sup>: that is, its own constructive work remains hidden from itself. Self-exegesis affirms itself but does not reflect on itself. It exists on the paradigm of nature. Hegel calls this mode of speech "barren assurance".<sup>15</sup> "By giving (this) assurance", he says "(a speech) would declare its force and value to lie in its bare existence".<sup>16</sup> The problem of self-exegesis is that it relies on its bare existence. It exists and immediately it acts. The absence of irony towards nature shown by its assumption that nature speaks directly through it bespeaks the presumptuousness or intemperance of self-exegesis. Self-exegesis tends to

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14. Garfinkel, 1967, p.7.

15. Hegel, 1949, p.135.

16. Loc. cit, p.134 (my emphasis).

imagine its own self-sufficiency.

If convention, then, understands itself as particularizing what is immediate to us, that is, life itself, how ought spirit - the passion to particularize limit or value - orient itself to convention? The problem with sheer convention - whether orthodox or unorthodox - is that it emasculates the conversational inquiry into the value or worth of what is chosen. The problem of value stops at the boundaries of the particular convention at hand. The convention is blind to itself in that it wants to forget as much and as quickly as possible that it is merely a convention: in the process of "naturalizing" the convention, the capacity to restore and renew the problem of value is weakened. Indeed, the "naturalizing" process and the weakening of the question go hand in hand, together giving rise to the career of convention. When life - the immediate, natural, life - is the most valuable thing, nothing else can be interrogated with regard to value, or brought to bear on the problem of worth, without submitting first to the rule of life as the primary value. Yet life itself is not treated as a topic for inquiry: the real value of life is not a matter of conversation. Hence the question of value is treated as a merely technical problem answering to an already made decision that is shielded from question. The deep speaker wants to invite convention to lift the shield, that is, to permit the value of life to become a topic of inquiry rather than an assumption. The deep speaker wants to invite convention to become temperate.

The deep speaker invites re-appraisal of the notion that life is the most valuable thing. This means that the deep speaker wants, not the presuppositionless beginning, but the strongest beginning. He wants to re-collect the strongest beginning as the beginning that best

initiates the influence of value over speech. For the deep speaker speech is an image of life, because his speech aims to give life to value. Life per se is not valuable, but the value of life (speech) is that it has the capacity to re-enact (give life to) its collectedness with value or source. Giving life to the problem of worth requires the particularizing of the problem in speech, through the willing acceptance of what could be otherwise as a necessary feature of one's talk. What could be otherwise are the usages, examples, topics of conversation, as these become the conventions through which the inquiry achieves its voice and makes itself heard. Yet speech (unlike sheer biological life) is also required to orient to what could not be otherwise. What could not be otherwise is that in order to be truly resourceful, these conventions must be re-fashioned as offspring of the speaker's passion to give life to the problem "what is value?" in speech. The particularizations will vary from speaker to speaker as features of his upbringing, history of usage, and so on, but what is invariant is the need to make the passions around which they revolve answer to the question of worth - so as to develop this question as a spirited question. The speaker must respect both his own particularity - which is to say that any particularization will not be equally compelling for him - while remembering that every speaker has the opportunity to transform the mere familiarity of his upbringing into a set of usages and examples through which to re-invoke, once again and as if anew, the problem of worth. Thus the deep speaker seeks to be a conversationalist, re-engaging what has become merely (and lazily) conventional, not in order to undermine our adherence to it, but to see what the spirited enjoyment of it involves. The deep speaker is playful with convention, not by being flippant with it, or imagining that he should live without it, but rather by instrumentalizing it for the sake of

his interest. He seeks access to what is essential by constructing a convention that is enlivened by the passion for limit (the particularization of worth). The deep speaker plays with convention as the medium through which to give expression to the ends that are compelling.

### 3. Temperance, spirit, and convention.

Spirit's relation to convention we maintain to be one of positive irony. Whereas convention naturalizes itself, spirit requires irony towards nature. Only thus does spirit empower itself to achieve its strong relation to convention.

Spirit, as the passion for involvement with value, does not merely negate or undermine convention since convention (what could be otherwise) is required as the particular way in which the interest in what is essential is embodied and given voice. Spirit is positively ironic towards convention because while it recognizes the need for convention - and the need to throw oneself into convention in an enthusiastic way - it seeks to make convention answer, not merely to itself, but to that value or end for the sake of which convention uses itself. Spirit mediates passion and worth (in order to truly particularize the "essential concern" for value) by seeking to make available the passion that generates this or that convention, not merely the passion for life per se, but the passion for the worthy life, the "examined life". Spirit makes the problem of worth a lively, compelling, problem while seeking to temper the sheer passion for life in its multitudinous forms by making passion answer to what is best. Spirit tempers sheer physiology and seeks to transform it into a participant in theorizing. In this way Spirit re-presents for convention the work of moderating nature. Spirit shows convention that

in order to inherit truly valuable resources, it is necessary to recall its irony towards nature.

We saw earlier that the deep speaker is prone to remorse and disappointment. He might wait too long for the truly worthwhile to present itself: his passion, for lack of use, withers, becomes passive, and becomes a caricature of itself. In a sense, the deep speaker never even in this event, forgets himself, since his loss of passion causes a withdrawal from conversation which continually throws him back upon and thus reminds him of the principled reason for it.<sup>17</sup> Yet the principle becomes weakened through its enforced withdrawal from conversation, and comes more and more to be treated as "internal" to the deep speaker himself. So we can make good sense of the advice that is often proffered to the remorseful speaker that he needs to "forget himself" or "get out of himself": what this strongly means is that he must resist segregating his deep interest from the resistance and the fulfilment, the discipline and pleasure, of conversation among various interlocutors. The deep speaker must seek to make the activity or the passion of conversing the very resolution of his desire to do so - rather than impose as precondition the likelihood that the conversation merely "live up to" demands he makes in advance. The latter has as its consequence the interiorization of the question of worth, the treatment of it as a question of self-identity, the survival of the self's integrity in the face of the external threats offered to it by the violence of circumstance.

The interiorization of the question restricts the deep speaker to the "refusal to accept the notional". He is tempted to transform

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17. The failure of spirit in this instance - that is, the interiorizing and withdrawal of the question of worth - leads to a self-indulgence of inwardness. The speaker hides his interest from particularization - hence it becomes vague and impressionistic. There is something unjust about this self-indulgence, a kind of incipient injustice, that we shall have to question.



the question into one of building a self-identity within which integrity is equated with refusal. That is, the deep speaker could imagine that the desire for worth is best served through purity, terseness, aphoristic obscurity: in short, by keeping clear of the risk of compromise. Yet keeping clear of this risk also keeps clear of the possibility of particularization, since this requires precisely the willingness to make the question live through usages and examples, i.e. live through the variable and the many. Deep speaking, strongly, does not want to abdicate the realm of usage, that is, to leave it untouched by the deep need to re-involve it with its source. Rather, it seeks to re-call how the parts, various and many as they are, belong to the whole (to that which collects all) as particular possibilities for voicing our interest in what is one, the whole. Hence the deep speaker must reach out to the parts (the usages and examples through which he seeks to give convincing character to what is compelling). Remorse suffers the turning inward that preoccupies itself with the question "am I worthy of the whole?" Spirit, however, remembers that what makes it worthy of the whole (i.e. fit to be a part that answers to the whole) is the work it does to give the whole (the logos, the source) a memorable character through the re-enlivening of parts that re-call themselves to it.

Since spirit is the tempering of sheer physiology into the force of good, it also develops the resourcefulness that is other than sheer force. When resourcefulness is weakened into what is merely forceful, it becomes self-exegetic. Sheer force resonates with the power of enforceability, of convention, of the exigent. Sheer force has an exegetic interest in whatever is externally compelling. Now we can understand tolerance, sophistry, social control, and so on, as various ways of controlling what is externally compelling. In a way, they all re-enact



the externally compelling, because, although they intend to give speakers (a measure of) control over its worst excesses, this is achieved only through the various organizational and methodic devices that enforce a control that is itself only externally compelling. That is, control is treated as a matter of enforcement by the more powerful rather than of the rule of what is worthy. At the opposite extreme, remorse resonates with the absence of method, a turning away from that which is external to value. Remorse is the "refusal" of character, of self-identification: remorse hides itself from question, it makes itself inaccessible to whatever it considers itself to be above.

Unlike remorse, spirit is not a stranger to power. Spirit befriends power: it improves the merely forceful so that it answers to what is good. Spirit's interest is in re-collecting the intrinsic. The intrinsic is the essential matter or concern to which we orient in the pursuit of the question of worth. Now, recalling the notion of particularity, we are reminded that the intrinsic is not a ghostly, invisible "essence" devoid of content, but requires the life of some matter (of issue or usage) through which to achieve the persuasive character of an interest. Having an interest entails treating some conversant matter as a focus that is continually animating and inviting to talk. The speaker with an interest nourishes that interest in order to achieve a sense of its inexhaustible character, the sense that it can be recurrently topicalized without mere repetition. An interest is not inexhaustible to just anybody, because this relation has to be achieved through work in every instance. Yet what is truly inexhaustible is language, the source of speech, the source that demands the endless work of resource as the bringing to expression of its inexhaustibility.

An interest in what is merely extrinsic or consequential cannot orient itself to the question of worth. The capacity to ask about worth, as speech's essential capacity, is dependent on being able to say what is intrinsic, that is, on being interested in limit, in how an idea is limited by what is unlike it. Genuine worth is intrinsically as well as extrinsically valuable. It is valuable for its own sake as well as for its consequences.

Hence if being consumed by an interest in the extrinsic is not valuable, then neither is the alternative excess of aloofness. Overlooking the extrinsic generates a pale, weak, sense of the intrinsic, because the latter gets treated as "the pure", the "essential concern", which in the absence of spirit is liable to remain silent. The spirited speaker is neither overawed nor distracted by whatever is extrinsic, but rather establishes a conversation between the intrinsic and the extrinsic. Interest in the intrinsic (the innate, what could not be otherwise) is an interest in value, not a desire for inwardness or sheer subjectivity. So spirit seeks and cultivates conversation. The conversation takes the form of moderating the violence of the extrinsic for the sake of re-furbishing it for the theorist's use. Spirit draws upon resource in the face of what is initially strange, daunting or terrorizing, in order to sustain its expression of its interest. Instead of treating the problem of strange conditions as a merely personal problem spirit seeks to show how they are one more occasion to revive our attachment to what is intrinsic via speech. The decisive issue is the theorist's need to sustain his participation in resource in the midst of what is merely extrinsic: i.e. instead of being cut off from participation (by becoming either remorseful or exegetic), actually using the extrinsic for his interest by particularizing his interest in its midst.

#### 4. Spirit's enjoyment of the intrinsic.

We will conclude this chapter with an illustration of our argument by examining the work of a sociologist deeply concerned with convention, spirit, exigency, and the relations between them: Harold Garfinkel. Garfinkel is simply an example, since every attempt to particularize the social character of man's speech is faced with the same problem: how to deal with the exigent, i.e. sheer physiology, sheer convention, and so on. Spirit, as we have seen, relates to the exigent by seeking to befriend it, by seeking to playfully use it to re-generate the interest in what is intrinsic.

Now the temptation for the social theorist is to treat the exigent (the extrinsic) as something all-encompassing and hence, awesome. The extrinsic influences speakers through external compulsion, that is, it enforces itself upon them. Now, if "external" here, is taken to mean external to the individual, this can generate a Durkheim. Durkheim tells us that what is truly compelling is what is extrinsic in the sense of external to the individual - i.e. "society", or the "conscience collective". Garfinkel sees that this turns the individual into a "dope". Yet, like Durkheim, he tells us that what is truly compelling is what is extrinsic, in the more fundamental sense of: indifferent to worth. This sense was also present, of course, in Durkheim, for he glossed the value of "society" by treating it as valuable per se. And this more fundamental sense, obscured in Durkheim's work through his incessant focus on the individual/society dichotomy, comes to the fore in the work of Garfinkel.

Garfinkel is awed by the social order, what he calls "the moral order 'without'", what we have been calling the exigent or the extrinsic.<sup>18</sup>

18. See the following in Garfinkel (1967): "For Kant, the moral order 'within' was an awesome mystery; for sociologists the moral order 'without' is a technical mystery" (p.35). And again: "In the unknown ways that the accomplishment (of social structure) is commonplace it is for our interests, an awesome phenomenon". (p.10).

We call it extrinsic because it sustains its life through enforcement. Hence it resonates with the sheer force of rage rather than the mastered anger of the ideal speaker. For Garfinkel, *multis* lives the life of rage rather than of mastered anger. That is, the world of *multis* is an "obstinately familiar" one: common-sense devotedly accepts without question the parameters of its world and not only does not question but actively resists questioning these parameters. Like rage, it is the sheer particularism of conditions. We are justified in saying "conditions", because although they participate in an order (a whole), it is the order of intelligibility rather than value. That is, our interest in conditions can only be in them as so many extrinsic things: our interest can be a highly intelligent one, but not that of an ideal speaker. For Garfinkel, an interest in the social character of speech pre-empts the possibility of the ideal speaker (one who is interested in value, in the intrinsic). That is, his interest is in its "character" (external characteristics) rather than its nature (its fatedness, its essential demand to be social). Or, to put it again: he is interested in what is extrinsic (enforceable intelligibility) rather than in the work of spirit.

If the enraged member is more likely than the complacent one to state his preferences (to say that reasons have come to an end), then we could conceive an interest in provoking *multis*' rage. As we saw in the last chapter, sheer particularism becomes enraged when an element of strangeness is introduced by an interlocutor. Now we can explicate "sheer particularism" as love of the particular without reason. Its reason comes to an end because it has never had a chance to begin. So if we are interested in understanding what happens when reasons come to an end, we can introduce the strange. "Procedurally", Garfinkel

writes, "it is my preference to start with familiar scenes and ask what can be done to make trouble".<sup>19</sup> And again, of his famous common-sense-disrupting experiments, he says, "I have found that they produce reflections through which the strangeness of an obstinately familiar world can be detected" (p.38). He calls these experiments "aids to a sluggish imagination" (p.38). That is, the sluggish imagination of sheer particularism will be provoked into expressing its preferences by being enraged, i.e. through the introduction of the strange.

Garfinkel, of course, is not interested in what common-sense prefers: rather, he is concerned to locate what its limits are, where its reasons come to an end, at what point it becomes enraged, rather than, say, in the rage itself. He himself is other than common-sense. Yet he treats this "where" as something enforceable, something whose enforceability is intelligible and in need of being made visible through the workings of sheer intelligence. Garfinkel is the intelligent rather than the ideal speaker because he is interested in making rage visible rather than making it educable. He is interested in construing anger as the defence of enforceable familiarity (i.e. as rage) rather than as an expression of spirit (the interest in the intrinsic). We can develop this by examining the "trust" experiment.<sup>20</sup>

Garfinkel's idea in this experiment is that the "deliberate display of distrust" ought to lead to the production of "highly standardized effects" (and, as we can anticipate, affects) (p.50). "Trust" remains extrinsic for Garfinkel (i.e. unconnected with the life of spirit) in that he defines it merely as a "person's compliance with

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19. Garfinkel, 1967, p.37. Throughout the following discussion, references from this work are made by page-number.

20. Garfinkel, 1967 pp.49-53 ("Background understandings and social affects"). "Students were instructed to engage someone in conversation and to imagine and act on the assumption that what the other person was saying was directed by hidden motives that were his real ones. They were to assume that the other person was trying to trick them or mislead them" (p.51).

the expectancies of the attitude of daily life as a morality" (p.50). Trust means membership, convention, loving without reason. And being able to articulate what this consists of requires stepping outside of the "sluggish imagination", adopting the standpoint of the stranger with regard to the "obstinately familiar". Awe towards the obstinacy of the familiar, i.e. its enforceability, seems to require, for its self-sustenance, a standpoint of mistrust, of putting the "undoubtable" into doubt. But how could awe depend on an attitude of suspicion? Awe and suspicion are more opposite than similar: the awed one completely surrenders to something that silences him, whereas the suspicious one never affirms anything, never lets anything develop properly, because he always has an arresting question.

Notice however that the distrust practiced by Garfinkel himself is of a different order than the distrust he has instructed his students to engage in. The students were asked to assume "that what the other person was saying was directed by hidden motives". This is to distrust the familiar in order to render it epiphenomenal, less "real" than the "real" motives that lie underneath it. We can call this "motivational distrust", and remark that it captures the sense of suspicion's practice. However, Garfinkel seeks, not to discover the "real" motives underlying social action, but to make "background understandings" visible<sup>21</sup>. That is, the limits of familiarity, invisible to common-sense itself, are made visible - in order to display the awesome character of these limits. They are awesome because they are all-encompassing, supremely persuasive, vigorously self-enforcing. The interest is in seeing or understanding how these limits enforce themselves through the oriented compliance ("trust") of members. Members' trust is the enforcement of the limits of the familiar: the "demand for trust"

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21. His experiments are "aids to a sluggish imagination" designed to make commonplace scenes visible. See p.36, "Making commonplace scenes visible".



is now seen as the (potentially enraged) insistence on what is loved without reason. What is complied with by the member lacks reason in that it enforces itself: it is extrinsic. We can call the practice of making this unremittingly subtle enforcement visible, the practice of experimental distrust. Now experimental distrust, unlike suspicion, does not seek to undermine or challenge the member's practice, but rather to make its accomplishment as an enforceable practice (i.e. its groundedness in background understandings) visible or intelligible. In this way, experimental distrust re-achieves, on an intelligent, articulate level, the enforceability of the familiar. It is the awe of the insightful one rather than the faith of the blind.

Now we need to ask: in what sense do motivational distrust and experimental distrust forget or neglect the need for spirit? How could they be invited to become interested in a spirited version of trust?

Experimental distrust produces, in order then to test out the effects of, motivated distrust. Unlike suspicion, it does not distrust motives in order to find the "truth" behind them, but it asks: what happens when motives are distrusted? However, for experimental distrust, the "what happens" is merely an "affect" that is produced by "socially structured conditions" (p.49). That is, "what happens" is extrinsic - the re-affirmation of the enforceable - rather than spirited. Experimental distrust is not really interested in "what happens" per se (i.e. anger, disgust, bewilderment, anxiety, and so on) but only insofar as it is an indicator of the presence of the enforceable. Rather, it is interested in asking: what is the method of "distrusting motives", that has as its result the things that happen (anger, disgust, etc) when "motives" are "distrusted"? It explicates the gloss of "distrusting motives", but not of "what happens". Ethnomethodology's principle,



then, is to treat anger - for anger is the strongest affect that the experiments, especially the trust experiment, evoke - as an index or expression of the extrinsic. In other words, the experiments are designed to demonstrate the member's rage: to display how the life grounded in sheer particularity (the "obstinately familiar") defends itself through rage, anger without reason, mere insistence. Given this interest in displaying something, making it visible, the possibility of educating it (reminding it of the need for spirit) is sacrificed. Experimental distrust forgets the need for spirit, the demand that anger deeply is.

Our interest is not in arguing with Garfinkel about the existence or non-existence of multis, the potentially enraged member, and so on. Instead, given that Garfinkel's "member" coincides with our idea of rage (sheer particularism), the issue is one of principled speaking. We need to educate rage rather than show its necessity: we need to invite it to reflect rather than merely understand it. The interest in merely understanding common-sense leads to the desire to re-produce it: to design the experiment that will enable one to see what one is looking for. Instead, the interest in ideal speaking - in this context, the virtue of spirited anger as distinct from the excesses of rage or remorse - generates the desire to educate "common-sense" (Garfinkel's metaphor for rage).

To study the difference between education and re-producing rage, let us examine the outcome of the "trust experiment". Garfinkel writes that he expects that

"on the part of the person distrusted there should be the demand for justification, and when it was not forthcoming, as "anyone could see" it could not be, anger". (pp.50-51)

Here, the demand for justification is pre-anger: the anger follows the failure

of the demand. Now anger in its strong sense, because it is animated by spirit's Desire to befriend, lives in the throes of deciding between the strange and the unfriendly. This shows us that Garfinkel's "anger" is really rage, for it has already made this decision. To put this differently: strong anger coincides with the demand for reasons, whereas Garfinkel's "anger" follows the failure of this demand. For Garfinkel, "anger" results when "anyone can see" that any possible demand for justification will not be met. Yet the "anyone can see" is telling here. If a demand for reason fails when "anyone can see" that it will not be answered, then it is not, deeply, a demand for reason so much as a demand for confirmation or recognition. "Anyone can see" is the resource of one who seeks shared recognition (intersubjectivity) rather than reason (conversation). In short, it is the resource of particularism and rage.

The anger evoked by the experiment, we want to suggest, shows something stronger than the appeal to "anyone can see", something more than the man of habit's shrug of the shoulders. It shows spirit.

The first note Garfinkel makes of anger is the following.

"With many students (he writes) the assumption that the other person was not what he appeared to be and was to be distrusted was the same as the attribution that the other person was angry with them and hated them". (p.51)

Whereas Garfinkel takes this to be evidence of the enforceability of "trust" as compliance, we take it to show ego's need to find a reason for his own distrust. Ego decides that the "reason" he "feels" distrustful of alter is that alter is angry with ego. Yet why is alter angry with ego? Answering this question requires a stronger version of anger than mistrust, because anger as mistrust will not account for alter's anger with ego. Is alter angry (mistrustful) with ego because

ego is angry (mistrustful) with alter? Yet ego takes himself to be angry with alter because alter is angry with him. Since ego is showing an interest in reasons, this circular account is not enough to satisfy his demand. Instead, we take ego's attribution of anger to alter to be his construal of alter, not as a mistrustful one, but as one who is demanding trust. In pretending to mistrust alter, ego is brought vividly to confront the deep need for trust: he re-constructs alter as one who is entitled to demand trust, one who is entitled to be angry, one who is an oriented actor.

Garfinkel continues:

"On the other hand many victims, although they complained that the student had no reason to be angry with them, offered unsolicited attempts at explanation and conciliation" (pp.51-52).

For these alters, to experience ego's motivational distrust is to experience his anger. Again we are shown the need for a reason. Here, even though there was no reason for anger, anger was the "reason" for the distrust. Alter is prepared to account for one thing (distrust) by introducing another thing that he freely admits is itself unaccounted for. This, we consider, shows the strength of the need for a reason, i.e. the strength of the demand for trust. The worst thing, for an oriented actor, would be to live in a world of unaccountable distrust: hence, distrust will be explained now in terms of something else (anger) that can be explained later. The oriented actor says: sheer mistrust (mistrust without reason) is a hellish world, because it makes talk impossible, whereas anger is at worst troublesome (without apparent reason) because even then it opens the demand for an account. At worst, with anger, alter can get angry himself if ego's "anger" turns out (as here it does) to be without reason. When alter's attempts at conciliation, Garfinkel writes, were "of no avail there followed frank displays of anger and 'disgust'" (p.52).

For both ego and alter, ego's practice of motivational distrust is impossible except as grounded in anger, i.e. in a deep demand for trust. This was the demand that was truly compelling for all the oriented actors in the situation. Motivational distrust is not accepted as being entitled to arise, willy-nilly, without reason, in the natural course of events. The experiment shows us that everyday life is not the same as sheer rage (anger without reason). Both ego and alter will question imputed distrust, and will seek in this questioning to distinguish anger (the demand for reason) from rage (the absence of reason).

There is the spirit of the demand for trust in the students who were surprised to find, in the words of one, that

"once I started acting the role of a hated person I actually came to feel somewhat hated and by the time I left the table I was quite angry".

Garfinkel goes on to remark:

"Even more surprising to us, many reported that they found the procedure enjoyable and this included the real anger not only of others but their own". (p.52)

We find this report, not so much surprising, but refreshing or renewing: in short, enjoyable. For the report reminds us that the work of spirit is the enjoyment of (making) the demand, the enjoyment of re-discovering that anger does not signify collapse but can invigorate and renew by making a demand. The students were able to enjoy the anger because they remembered the work that goes into it: they remembered that anger is not some abysmal reflex. The students re-discovered the enjoyment of spirit in the midst of potentially tyrannical conditions. They re-enacted the good of seeking to satisfy or resolve anger, the joy of remembering that the conditions of social structure are not the limits of spirit.

## CHAPTER FIVE

AWE AND DESIRE1. Desire and the problem of difference

The ironic speaker seeks to particularize the interest in worth. We have shown that irony towards nature (e.g. physiology) is necessary in order to develop this Desire. Irony towards nature enables the speaker to inherit resources for the particularizing of value. Now to particularize an interest is to make a difference to mere existence (nature).

Central to our formulation of the ideal speaker is a notion that in order to sustain the Desire to particularize value, resourceful speech is required. The ideal speaker desires speech and resourcefulness - where resource is strongly grasped as the particularizing of value. Yet, as we will see in the next section, there is an important alternative version of Desire. In effect, it says that to limit Desire by speech and resource is to weaken it. To seek vainly to integrate Desire and speech, this version says, is to dissipate genuine Desire, to lose its focus, to sacrifice its ineffable purity. Genuine Desire is irreducible to speech, it tells us. This notion directs our inquiry towards the problem of Desire's relation to speech. First, however, we must provide ourselves with a more fully developed notion of Desire.

The ideal speaker wants to sustain his Desire to particularize worth. Yet this is vastly different from a life of mere suspended anticipation, where desires are prolonged and unfulfilled simply in order to keep them alive. That is, it is stronger than the life of flirtation. The flirt has forgotten that life, since it ends, is a

kind of consummation: a life should be satisfying rather than unsatisfying. The consummate life remembers that the inexhaustible and self-replenishing character of Desire (i.e. our true need to keep speech open to the worthy and beneficial) is served rather than threatened by the completion and fulfilment of particular desires.

However, the consummate life does not simply seek the gluttonous fulfilment of an endless succession of desires. That is, the ideal speaker seeks to moderate the extremes of flirtatiousness and gluttony<sup>1</sup>. Now although they seem to be opposites, flirtatiousness and gluttony are at least alike in that they are never able to develop or deepen their desires. The flirt touches only the surface, whereas the glutton consumes or destroys, and then seeks more. Their problem, then, is that neither of them matures his desires. Because their desires are perpetually unsatisfied, they always begin again just where they began the first time. They are essentially repeaters: the flirt seeks to sustain his particular desire by never consummating it, whereas the glutton is incapable of consummating it because he doesn't know what would satisfy him. This suggests that the difference they make is not a real difference. They are unhappy because although they want to make a difference they are unable to do more than repeat themselves.

This means that neither the flirt nor the glutton are spirited. Spirit empowers the ideal speaker to particularize his interest because it composes his willingness to trust resource. Spirit trusts resource by giving itself over to the work of developing it through particular expression - rather than suspecting the particularity of resource (as remorse does) or limiting resource by imprisoning it in this or that particular (as rage does).

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1. S.Raffel, (1979) pp.31-32 develops the notion of the glutton's greed as a way of capturing the observer's desire for perpetual life.

We can understand the flirt, who never reaches a conclusion with anything, as the negative ironist. Kierkegaard says of the negative ironist that he has a merely abstract grasp of the Idea<sup>2</sup>, and in this sense he can be said to continuously flirt with the Idea. The flirt is often said to be suggestive. Here we can understand suggestiveness as a kind of speaking which never decisively takes responsibility for what it seeks or for its own Desire, but hopes for others to make something of its hints. In this way, the flirt can apparently be rescued occasionally by the decisive speaker, but the rescue does not really improve anything if it only consists of doing the flirt's work for him rather than inviting him to begin working (i.e. deciding) for himself. Now it might seem here that the flirt's problem is that his relation to his desires is (too) ironic - i.e. he lives only to perpetuate rather than satisfy his desires. Without irony, perhaps he can consummate his desire and mature his passion or interest. However, it is the glutton whose very problem is his absence of irony. The glutton always wants more because he is unable to see the kind of difference his desires make. What the glutton does not grasp is that particular desires furnish the invitation, not to satiate them for their own sakes, but to treat them as occasions through whose consummation the Desire for worth is re-collected. Unlike the flirt, the deep speaker does not live on the edge of Desire: but unlike the glutton, he does not become frustrated because of the partial character of the particular consummation. The flirt's problem is not his irony, but the negative character of his irony. Unlike the flirt, the deep speaker seeks to make conclusions when appropriate, because not to do so starves Desire of the development it needs. The glutton on the other hand imagines that consummation can, through multiplication, reach infinity: he seeks

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2. Kierkegaard, (1968), p.238.



nothing else than eternal repetition. The ideal speaker, instead of multiplying consummation, treats the satisfaction it gives as his way of maturing his Desire. Consummation is the development of Desire.

We want now to develop our grasp of how the achievement of temperance, or a strong sense of Desire, requires us to reflect on the nature of Desire. Flirtation and gluttony are weak versions of Desire. The flirt, as we have seen, is the negative ironist as one whose Desire remains tangential. Later, we will want to ask how gluttony develops itself as a speech. For now, our notion of the weakness of both is their failure to consummate their desires. The ideal speaker, we begin by saying, develops as a consummate speaker. Our work is to develop this very initial idea. We shall seek to achieve this in terms of the ideal speaker's problem of justice. But first (Chapter 5) we must explore the alternative version of Desire displayed in Kierkegaard's work. We have to respond now to the rejection of Socratic Desire in a way that is not flirtatious (negatively ironic). We must develop the strongly ironic notion of Desire.

## 2. Awe and the use of resource.

The idea of Desire reminds us of the charges made against Socrates (the theorist) by Kierkegaard, and thus serves as an icon around which we can re-consider theoretic responsibility. Kierkegaard's charge is that Socratic ignorance is a crime against the community. We will construct the speaker who could raise this charge by seeking to formulate the ideas it draws upon. Kierkegaard's (or any) speech is dependent on its source in language: deeply, it needs to integrate itself with the whole by truly belonging together with its source - rather than forgetting its source. Speech that forgets its source invents secondary

reasons for why it wants to speak: polemic, competitiveness, self-description, and so on. That is, it forgets its Desire. The theorist seeks to re-call Desire by asking after that which (any) speech Desires.

To say that Socratic ignorance is a crime against the community questions Socrates' relationship to ignorance. Socrates' animation, Kierkegaard (in our re-construction) would say, comes from his hatred of ignorance, and in this sense, it remains abstract. Hence Socrates remains negatively ironic. Negative irony is only a symptom of something, a symptom of Socrates' defectiveness (his abstractness, his negative relation to the Idea). Socrates is defective in that he does not really know love. Socrates' Desire is merely abstract. Socrates' speech, having its origin in his hatred of ignorance, knows the good only by implication: the good is merely Other, other than ignorance. For Kierkegaard, Socrates' problem is his unwillingness to defer to the Good, to undergo a positive experience with the limit. He does not know how to love the Good, that is to defer to it, to let himself go<sup>3</sup>. Socrates' pride prevents him from finding anything awesome. He relates dutifully, rather than deferentially, to that which is greater than himself. Yet despite his incapacity to love, to experience the awesome, Socrates claims to theorize. The member of the community does not experience awe, yet he also has the modesty to defer to his place: he does claim to be qualified to pursue the inquiry about the good. What is criminal is to claim to be qualified when one is really deficient, lacking in the capacity to experience the enigma of the source. To respect the enigma of the whole is to show awe towards it. Socrates lacks the capacity for awe because he is unwilling (too proud)

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3. Notice that this makes Socrates sound like the Critias we encountered in Chapter Three. As we shall see, one version of what Kierkegaard is saying is that there is nothing to choose between Critias and Socrates.

to show acceptance of the enigmatic character of the whole. If the whole is essentially enigmatic, if it is greater and higher than us, then our experience of it is essentially one of not being adequate to it. "Every good and perfect gift is from above", Kierkegaard reiterates from the Scriptures<sup>4</sup>, and it is in the nature of such gifts that they are irremediably enigmatic. It is human folly and pride, the folly of constructive theorizing, the failure to truly love the gift, to imagine that its awesome and enigmatic character can ever be surmounted. It is not for us to formulate the gift but simply to accept it with overflowing gratitude of heart.

Socrates succumbs to one of the very temptations discussed by Kierkegaard in his discourse, the vanity of trying to tempt God: the vanity of thinking that men can inquire about what is best for them, which is like seeking to know God's thoughts<sup>5</sup>. This is a refusal of awe in favour of re-construction, a refusal of love in favour of duty, a refusal of the ineffable experience of the awesome enigma of the whole in favour of an artificial re-synthesis after the fact. Awe, the acknowledgement of the enigma of the whole, is also an acceptance that "life is a dark saying",<sup>6</sup> an acceptance that life is not adequate to the comprehension of the enigma. The enigma (the Other) could only be re-constructed on this side of man's thinking, and hence this very re-construction would essentially falsify what is Other than man. The enigmatic Other remains unimpeachable at the hands of man because of his essential inadequacy. Any attempt to re-collect it in speech is inevitably a translation that instantly sacrifices the awe-inspiring enigma. As we see, this charge draws upon one of the most fundamental

4. Kierkegaard, Two Edifying Discourses. See R.Brettal ed, 1946, p.110.

5. Kierkegaard's words are: "With humble prayers and burning desires you sought, as it were, to tempt God" (loc.cit, p.112). "You wished that God's ideas about what was profitable to you might be your ideas.....(and thus to) corrupt God's eternal Being". (loc.cit, p.114)

6. Loc.cit. p.114.

ideas of modernity: the this-sidedness of man's thinking. What is at issue for modernity is the precise nature of man's thinking; the rules it must follow to preserve its this-sidedness; whether "this-sided thinking" is man's most valuable possession, or whether existence, experience, etc, is more fundamental; and so on. But at the root of all these controversies is the notion that thinking, whether it be the most or the least valuable thing, is incapable of venturing into the realm of what is greater than man without essentially distorting the whole. The relation to the whole that awe recommends is one of deference and a deep sense of one's own inadequacy. Awe is sustained in the notion of life as a "dark saying": awe accepts that "life is a dark saying", that is, that life is a kind of darkness in the face of the whole.

This returns us to the conversation in Chapter Three between Socrates and Critias. We recall that a decisive point was reached in the conversation when Critias for the first time gave expression to a notion of strangeness. He became willing to acknowledge his own ignorance and to ask Socrates to "make me understand what you mean" (173a). Socrates had achieved this transformation from intelligence to the Desire to inquire by taking the risk of indulging Critias. At this point, Kierkegaard might commend Socrates: the fruit of the risk, for Kierkegaard, would be that instead of experiencing his own intelligence, Critias experiences awe.

It is what Socrates makes of this situation that Kierkegaard finds objectionable. Instead of remaining with Critias in the purity of Desire that is his awe, Socrates continues in motion by developing further questions. Eventually he tells Critias and Charmides that they still do not know what temperance is. Inquiry must therefore continue. Socrates' refusal to accept awe as the terminus of conversation

is construed by Kierkegaard as showing that deeply there is nothing to choose between Critias and Socrates. Kierkegaard would say they are the same in that Socrates' development in the face of awe amounts to his election of Critian intelligence and foolish pride. For Kierkegaard, the Socratic Desire to formulate is the same as intelligence. It will not defer to, but instead manipulates, the Good.

Awe rejects Socrates (the theorist) because he does not know where the quest for knowledge (theorizing) stops and awe begins. Consider here the notions of silence recommended by awe, and by Socrates. Kierkegaard starts with his inadequacy (in the face of the enigma). He insists that the power that limits one (the whole) must be experienced as superior. "Every great and every perfect gift comes from above". Awe is essentially mute in the face of the higher power: awe does not seek to converse with what leaves it speechless. Yet, when the god spoke to Socrates through the Delphic oracle, and told Socrates that he was the wisest of all, far from leaving Socrates speechless it simply invited him to greater efforts of conversation. Socrates did not experience awe, but instead he decided to test the truth of the oracle. Awe begins with the experience of inadequacy and seeks to generate the immutable, the muteness of awe, the unconversational intuition of enigma: we might say, awe's scepticism is most deeply directed towards conversation and its attendant pride and vanity. Instead, the theorist starts with the adequacy of what he needs (to recollect, within speech or conversation, the influence of the whole) and seeks through inquiry to re-achieve the aporia of speech with respect to its beginning, as the incentive to continue and deepen the inquiry. Being named by the oracle does not silence Socrates: it compels him to inquire.

Kierkegaard wants, not so much to stop, as to be stopped by the awe-inspiring, to be silenced by it. Kierkegaard thinks that Socrates does not know when to stop, that he is really like self-exegesis, talking endlessly. Kierkegaard's notion of the limit, the ground of the community, is that it mutes us. Although self-exegesis does not know it, it is grounded in the ineffable. Kierkegaard might quarrel with self-exegesis because it is deaf to awe, because it is intemperate and opinionated, but deeply he seeks to silence it (within himself) by bringing it to defer to its limit. Kierkegaard, who treats the grounds of community as awesome, wants self-exegesis (which is ignorant of its own limit) to be awed by him. Kierkegaard is attracted by the idea of the speech that will "will one thing"<sup>7</sup>, the speech that will show its deference to the awesome, the speech that will silence multis (many-ness). Socrates rejects this invitation because he does not want to stop self-exegesis. Because Socrates deeply accepts his beginning (the adequacy of Desire) he is able to resist injustice (stopping self-exegesis).

Awe begins with its sense of inadequacy, with its guilt, with its problem of self-identity. It treats man as the essentially passive recipient of the gifts from above: its experience of Other confirms its inadequacy. Thus its experience of Other treats it as complete or conclusive with respect to man. This is a beginning decisive in its unhappiness, its self-preoccupation, its sense of estrangement. Awe, because it begins unhappily, is oriented to a decisive stop, a stopping that abolishes (mutes) the unhappiness of its own beginning. Alternative to this is the idea of the theorist as one who, since he accents the adequacy of that with which he begins, is able to stop.

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7. Kierkegaard, Purity of Heart is to Will One Thing. See Bretall ed, 1946, pp.271 et seq.



Socrates can start and end conversations in a strong spirit because starting re-activates Desire (shows our acceptance of Desire) and stopping does not close the Desire, but enjoys the consummation that the conversation provides in the form of its achieved methods, practices, and conclusions. Stopping is not (as in the case of awe) oriented to the exhaustion of Desire, but rather to its replenishment. To stop a conversation is to resist the temptation to make it go on forever, thus diluting Desire, but instead to keep the Desire to particularize worth fertile. When conversation begins in the light of adequacy, then this means: it need not be preoccupied about stopping. What stops is the particular, occasioned, inquiry into some idea, the composed self-recollection that answers to Desire. What never stops is the call of Desire itself, the need to converse, the need to formulate. Stopping is composed rather than essential, decisive rather than necessary, chosen rather than ineluctable. One stops when it is appropriate to, not when one is forced to.

Awe's relation to Other (that which it treats as essentially enigmatic) has profound consequences for the kind of speaking it comes to generate. We have spoken already of awe's estrangement from its source: awe's relationship of deference and self-annihilation in the face of the enigma means that language remains a stranger to it. The grounds of speech remain hidden and unfathomable: the source of the community's practices is awesome. Awe, in short, has no notion of the intrinsic which in this context means, the ideas that enable us to collect resource with language. In a sense, it "overstates" the intrinsic character of the source, thereby rendering it extrinsic, or external to the inquirer. It overstates the intrinsic by treating man, the inquirer, as extrinsic, as deeply estranged from source (the intrinsic).



sic). Speech and language remain essentially estranged: awe's notion of what is greater than speech (i.e. the enigmatic) does not invite or entertain the belonging together of speech with its source.<sup>8</sup>

### 3. Awe and artifice.

Awe is that relation towards one's Other (that which silences one) that treats it as self-sufficient, signalling the speaker's impotence or insignificance. Awe says: the Other, in its ineffable, irreducible, and irremediable otherness, is awe-inspiring. Instead, we seek (by coming to formulate Desire) to treat Other, what silences us, as the need to formulate (i.e. the need to converse, to seek principle within speech). The need to formulate Desire (to moderate the temptation of awe) is the need to live in a fertile way with what is Other: the need to overcome its strangeness without seeking to familiarize it, the need to overcome its abstractness without simply concretizing it, the need to speak from within its grip without becoming merely intense.

The Desire for the expression of value risks ironizing communal practises in order to re-open the idea of worth as a problem. This is a notion of an end that can never be terminated. Awe, however, rejects theorizing on the basis that it risks (all or any) community. Awe is indifferent to the particularities of the community that is established (it is apolitical in this sense), but goes on to insist that the community ought to be recognized as awesome. Awe accuses theorizing of the failure to show trust. We learned from Garfinkel in the previous chapter that trust is a central ingredient in social interaction: without trust, life would be impossible. Without trust,

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8. The argument of this section has been indebted in particular to Alan Blum.

the competence through which the social is enacted would be incapacitated: it would soon cease to function. For Garfinkel, trust establishes the possibility of social life (of the moral order "without") by enforcing and thus maintaining the context within which normal social competencies become operative. Garfinkel shows that the life of man is not "nasty, brutish, and short", that it does not need an external sovereignty, because it has its own sovereignty internal to it - the rule of trust. Awe's strongest claim, then, is to trust: it establishes the centrality of trust for life, and also charges the theorist with a lack of trust. Awe says that the theorist can never justify anger because he does not know how to trust.

Although Garfinkel does not explicitly draw the distinction we have made in the previous chapter between experimental and motivational distrust, the consequences of this distinction surface in various ways throughout his writing - showing that it is an implicit resource for him. Most importantly, of course, it has decisive implications for his notion of adequate sociological method: whereas hitherto, most sociologists have been constructive theorists, seeking to remedy the indexicality (conventionality) of everyday life, bureaucracy, etc, Garfinkel seeks to understand the intricacies of the "technical mystery" through which a "person's compliance with the attitude of daily life as a morality"<sup>9</sup> is enforced. The basic point here is that since man is completely conventional, and since a person's compliance consists of his compliance to a convention, the enforcement is not imposed from outside (by "society" or whatever) but is re-achieved, from moment to moment, by the speaker himself. What is re-achieved is not passive obedience but rather, the whole edifice of convention which does not

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9. Garfinkel 1967. p.50. Subsequent references are to page numbers.

exist outside of this ongoing re-achievement. This leads Garfinkel to his famous condemnation of the judgemental dope syndrome within sociology, that is, the use of explanations which fall prey to externalizing the order governing man's speech and action. Garfinkel writes:

"The common feature of these 'models of man' is.....that courses.....of judgement..... (involving) the person's use of common sense knowledge.....are treated as epiphenomenal" (p.68, my emphasis).

By treating "courses of judgement" as "epiphenomenal", these "models of man" treat speech as being ruled by something prior to speech: motives, interests, social conditions etc. Garfinkel, then, has a principled interest in showing that man is not governed by the external, but governs himself through what is internal (convention): he seeks to achieve this by showing that there is nothing external to convention. Garfinkel is in effect saying that by treating conventions as epiphenomenal, those theorists who espouse "models of man" are themselves practicing motivational distrust. By casting doubt over what they would call the "rationalizations" by which common-sense accounts for itself, they place the integrity of convention in jeopardy.

Garfinkel's technique of experimental distrust is designed, as we have said, not to risk the stability of conventional practices, but on the contrary to show their truly enforceable (powerful) character - and incidentally to protect them from those who dismiss them as epiphenomena. This reminds us of the Greece within which the Sophists also treated convention as epiphenomenal, as a mere "manner of speaking" that could be brought for a price in order to further one's private motives and interests. Now we can see how awe (Garfinkel) opposes the sophist, by showing him that it is impossible to think outside of

convention, to think the other-than-convention (nature) so dearly valued by the sophist. By showing the sophist that art (convention), although chronologically coming after nature, is really prior to it in the sense of being more fundamental, awe wants to show him that it is impossible for man to be ruled merely by capricious motive: such a man would be unable to speak. Man is fundamentally social, not by virtue of "the human condition", his ontological constitution, and so on, but because of the nature of speech as convention. The question now emerges: given the option of showing the priority of art or convention, why would the theorist choose to risk convention through the relentlessness of Socratic conversation? Is it not perverse, awe asks, to refuse the invitation of awe, the invitation that protects man from the sophist? Why risk art (convention) when one has the option of showing its awesome character? The theorist now is challenged (called upon) to give a reason for the risk he takes. The deep speaker replies to awe's charge by reflecting on the need for the risk. The risk is necessary because without it Desire is killed. In other words, awe, by refusing the risk, weakens the influence of worth on our speech and action. Awe, by protecting us from what is worst in man (unregulated impulse) also segregates us from what is best. It prevents the work of transforming the idea of worth into what is worthy in man (virtue). Man, although saved from being his own worst enemy, is denied the opportunity of befriending what is best.

Kierkegaard provides us with telling usage for this idea. In his Philosophical Fragments he takes up the problem of the teacher and his relation to truth. He begins by discussing Socratic maieutics. Kierkegaard comments that the foundation or premise upon which this practice rests is that, for Socrates, "at bottom every human being is

in possession of the Truth"<sup>10</sup>: in other words, it is not necessary for Socrates to introduce anything extraneous, but merely to induce his interlocutor to remember what he had forgotten. Now although Kierkegaard's notion has an embryonic truth in it, because of the abstract way in which he states it, i.e. because (although true) he does not really understand it, he is unable to accept it. Kierkegaard needs a notion that would enable him to agree to the thesis that although we often forget the Truth, we are "at bottom.....in possession of the Truth". Our paradigm for this is language, the learning of which is dependent on the orientation of the learner towards its order, that is, on the belonging of the learner within language<sup>11</sup>. The idea of language enables us to give a sense to (i.e. to particularize) the proposition that we are already in the grip of Truth, and that our need is to bespeak (give usage to) this grip.

The issue now is this: what relation between usage and its source constitutes inquiry? For the ideal speaker, usage is needed in order to deepen our relation to our source: usage consummates our Desire to be influenced by the worthwhile. The ideal speaker seeks to make his usage compelling (he seeks to be compelled by it) because otherwise he becomes flirtatious or gluttonous. For both the flirt and the glutton any usage will serve their purposes, but their problem is that no usage will satisfy. The flirt does not mature his interest because he is untouched by any of the usages he skates over, whereas the glutton is a greedy character because, given his aim of eliminating his need for the realm of usage, he seeks to voraciously consume (incorporate) it. The glutton wants to be a kind of empire unto himself.

10. Kierkegaard, Philosophical Fragments. See R. Bretall ed, 1946, p.158.

11. Mathematics, of course, stands as another instructive paradigm of learning as the re-collection of our "forgotten" knowledge. See Plato, The Meno, 1956.

The glutton seems to say "I am (or long to be) self-sufficient, I have (or long to have) everything I need to live to the full". He spends forever packing his bags and never gets to make the journey - whereas the flirt never stays anywhere long enough to need a bag. Instead, the ideal speaker seeks the right measure of preparation, movement, and arrival (stopping) in his relationship to usage. When he takes up a particular usage, he does so not with the intention of simply dropping it tomorrow, nor of exhausting every possibility in advance, but rather in the spirit of consummating his work.

In the absence of a compelling version of Truth as that which we already possess, Kierkegaard conceives a need to import it from outside. He wants to treat the moment in which the truth is revealed as decisive, so that it can never be forgotten. The problem with the Socratic conception, says Kierkegaard, is that the teacher is merely an occasion, a vanishing moment serving only to remind us of the whole and then disappearing within it. "How rare", Kierkegaard exclaims, "is such magnanimity!"<sup>12</sup> Because of the contradiction between the Socratic notion of continuous re-achievement and the sheer scarcity of magnanimous teachers "in a time like ours .....when almost every second person is an authority"<sup>13</sup>, Kierkegaard experiences the need for something less risky, something more assured. The moment itself must be made somehow decisive so that its lesson will never be forgotten. In a word, the moment must be made awesome. The decisive moment becomes external to the speaker. It becomes the good and perfect gift "from above" (i.e. from outside), through which all is changed. As we know, this awe leads Kierkegaard to re-construct the Christian notion of the teacher as saviour (as divine): first,

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12. Kierkegaard, Philosophical Fragments: in R.Bretall ed 1946, p.156.

13. Loc.cit., p.156.



"if (the moment) is to have decisive significance the seeker must be destitute of the Truth up to the very moment of his learning it"; then, "if the learner is to acquire the Truth, the Teacher must bring it to him". 14 (my emphasis)

The point here, however, is that awe externalizes its Other. Other is externalized in Kierkegaard by being sanctified as ineffable, by being called "the Truth"; in Garfinkel by being treated as extrinsic (since nothing other than convention is enforcable). Awe refuses to take the risk of Desiring what is best because its principle (protecting us from what is worst) sees the risk as unjustified.

Awe depends on artifice, on technique, in order to generate its passion, and in this sense we can say that its Desire is artificial. This surfaces in Kierkegaard as the problem of uncertainty and the "passion of the infinite". Kierkegaard draws a cleavage between the objective and the subjective. The essential truth is inward: it is a question of "the relationship sustained by the existing individual, in his own existence, to the content of his utterance"<sup>15</sup>. It is the "passionate inwardness" that is decisive, not the "objective content" (here Kierkegaard is guarding above all against hypocrisy): so he defines truth as "an objective uncertainty held fast in an appropriation process of the most passionate inwardness"<sup>16</sup>. Indeed, given this divorce of utterance (usage) from intent (inquiry) - a divorce introduced by the hypocrite and treated as decisive by Kierkegaard - then, the higher the degree of uncertainty, the better for "passionate inwardness". Hence the attractiveness of the "paradox" of Christianity for Kierkegaard. "Without risk", he comments, "there is no faith".<sup>17</sup>

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14. Loc.cit., p.158.

15. Kierkegaard, 1941, p.181 (my emphasis).

16. Loc.cit. p.182.

17. Loc.cit. p.182.



Notice that this is to treat risk as embracing uncertainty (and hence becoming fixated upon it): instead we want to recommend risk as the work of sustaining one's self in the face of uncertainty, for the sake of the Desire for what is good rather than protective.

Kierkegaard continues: "If I am capable of grasping God objectively, I do not believe, but precisely because I cannot do this I must believe". The believer remains "out upon the deep, over seventy thousand fathoms of water, still preserving ( his) faith"<sup>18</sup>. This image nicely captures awe's gluttony as a sort of whipping up of passion by relying on what is external. Indeed, because source is essentially external for awe, our passion (since it is incapable of being a genuine Desire for the influence of worth on the actual content of our utterances) has to be whipped up artificially, through the use of devices like the "paradox", the "seventy thousand fathoms", and so on. This has its analogue in Garfinkel in the estrangement he needs to introduce in order to make "commonplace scenes visible", that is, in order to be able to see. In itself, the accomplishment of the moral order is something that members "obstinately depend upon, recognize, use, and take for granted".<sup>19</sup> The moral order is obstinately familiar - and this requires the forceful resistance of the theorist. Knowledge is seen as a struggle against a resistant object, as a kind of war against the recalcitrant.

Now Garfinkel says that social settings can only be known and understood "from within" yet this basic recommendation needs to be

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18. Loc. cit. p. 182.

Compare this desire for oceans of water with the following passage from The Republic as quoted by Kierkegaard himself as a prelude to The Concept of Irony. "The fact is that when a man is out of his depth, whether he has fallen into a little swimming bath or into mid-ocean, he has to swim all the same". Here the focus of attention is on the swimming rather than on the water. The work of dialectic is not served, any more than that of swimming, by introducing artificially the ubiquitous depths of the unknown!

19. Garfinkel, 1967, p.1, my emphasis.

examined more fully in the context of awe. It is usually taken to suggest that the theorist ought not externalize himself from the object of his inquiry (the "commonplace scene"). On the contrary, the inquirer is to make it more (not less) vivid than it already is. Yet this is a strange - in the literal sense- version of making usage more vivid, since it requires the technique of estrangement, of "making trouble", in order to locate the theorist "within" the setting. "Making visible" requires "making trouble". Garfinkel's original sense of the awesome character of "commonplace scenes" requires that he too, artificially whip up the passion of knowing and understanding. As with Kierkegaard earlier, the passion is artificial - not only because it depends for its life on device and strategy (the "seventy thousand fathoms", the "trouble", the "risk" that is not really a risk but a device) but more deeply, because it is born of the initial estrangement of the Other. When the source of Desire is estranged, passion has to be re-introduced artificially by the speaker. Passion comes to rely on the device, or the trick. This can help us to understand the problem awe has in being convincing. Awe has a tendency to be melodramatic, owing to the tenuous character of its passion. The community of awe is not a teaching or conversational community, but one in which the players outbid each other for heightened effect. Awe is melodramatic in that, like melodrama, it has no grip on the intrinsic. Sheer emotion without substance is heightened beyond all proportion because sheer emotion is our only response when the source of our speech becomes estranged. As a result of this estrangement, nothing rings true any longer: an atmosphere of unreality is established in which there is an increasing tendency towards hysteria.

#### 4. The martyrdom of awe.

What is it that holds these different versions of awe together? It is the idea of the split life. The split life is the life that segregates its own speech from the source of that speech: it produces speech that treats its own origin as unspeakable. The social order problem this generates becomes most visible when we consider the question of community. For awe, the grounds of community are enigmatic, unspeakable. Either one defers to the enigma (is awed by the grounds), or else one is a member. The member is deaf to awe, he simply follows communal practices and usages. Yet if the member is not compelled by any sense of awe to respect the community, how shall the community sustain itself? The member must have, or be given, some way of remembering and bequeathing community. There is a need for discipline, duty, intelligibility and social order in the face of awe, for awe in itself can provide only muteness rather than speech: in any case, the member is immune to awe. What awe loves (the enigma) is essentially mute, that is, removed from life: because of this, awe comes to inhabit an inner realm that is separated from the possibility of conversation. But in the realm of life, awe must surrender to the policing of duty and enforceable intelligibility. This, then, is the split that piety towards language produces: that an unconversational duty to the grounds of community must be sustained as the price of the experience of the enigmatic. For awe, the Socratic practice of inquiring into grounds, into the belonging together of speech and source, risks community. That is, it places the community in jeopardy. Socrates raises questions which seek to induce the member to address the grounds of his practices, to question the nature of the good community, to go beyond duty as the expression of his relation to the social. Where Kierkegaard invites others to share the ineffable experience of awe as an inner and essen-

tially subjective truth<sup>20</sup>, thus protecting (by segregating) the grounds of the communal, Socrates seeks to make grounds conversational. In the present context, this means that Socrates seeks to treat conversation as a method of re-invoking the Desire for the source's influence in that very conversation. Conversation collects itself around its Desire because the Desire needs to be given a life by being made conversational. By collecting conversation around its Desire (to re-enact or display the influence of its source in the good) the strongly passionate speaker seeks to unify his life in/with his speaking.

Now if the flirtatious life is dispersed among many things, having only a tenuous relation to any one of them, what is greed? In a way, greed also embodies a unified life, for it is usually fixated upon a particular object - money, food, or even life. Yet the unity of greed differs crucially from the unity of Desire, in that greed is fixated (as we say) on a single object, whereas Desire develops itself by particularizing value within speech. Greed treats the aim of its desire as an object that will satiate it whereas Desire's aim is the practice that consummates its relation to its source.

Now we can see that awe resonates in its single-mindedness with greed. Awe is moral greed or moral intemperance in that it is a kind of craving for unlimited good, or good that is not limited by the finite usage through which it shows itself. In the case of awe, single-mindedness takes the form of intensity. This gives to awe its sense of its own nobility, not in the sense that it equates itself with what is higher, but rather because it differentiates itself from the mundane on the basis of this intensity. Awe's intensity is its passion

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20. See "Truth is Subjectivity", in Kierkegaard, 1941, pp.169-224.

for the good that has turned into greed for the good, i.e. it has turned "the Good" into an object of devotion rather than the value that needs particularizing. This is why the intense person converses with difficulty. He has always imagined and feared that to risk consummating his desires would risk dispersiveness, and that this would make him immoral. As a result, he relies on his intensity to act as the motor of his talk: his "outwardness" (the need for conversation) is made dependent on a "deep inwardness" rather than on spiritedness. Socrates would say that awe's discovery is only the beginning. Nobody willingly does evil, he says: that is, we all notionally subscribe to good. Conversation seeks to turn the notional into knowledge (hence realized virtue) by particularizing it.

What is the nature of awe's intensity, and what is its relation to the split life? Intensity is in awe of the good. It finds it difficult to live with the idea of source (the good): hence it elevates artificial and grandiose ideas like "being shaken to the foundations". Intensity is the outcome of an awe that treats itself as an experience of the good, pure and simple. The experience of awe is regarded as a kind of salvation. Yet awe is segregated from its source, because the source of which it is an overwhelming experience remains, for all that, ineffable. Awe is segregated from its source (its Other) because it experiences its Other as irremediably estranged. Awe feels permanently estranged from what is Other, because it knows that Other's nature could never be made to coincide with self-consciousness. The self-consciousness or speech of man can only, by its very nature, violate what is truly Other to that speech. Indeed, in a sense, says awe, this is as it ought to be, for by virtue of this situation, Other preserves its character as truly Other. To seek to familiarize Other, to domes-

ticate it, to make our speech (or minds) coincide somehow with it, would, at the same instant, effect a transformation of Otherness into Sameness, thus losing the Other as such by making it non-Other. Our task, in response to awe, is to formulate a strong notion of Other that no longer generates estrangement but instead invites friendship and conversation. Other is greater than self-consciousness yet it requires conversation (i.e. the realized consciousness of value within practices) rather than devotion (i.e. the treatment of Other as an object of greed). This task, as it has now emerged, was bequeathed to us by the opening chapter.

Awe sustains an estranged Other in the belief that this preserves its character as "Other"(strange), that is, it estranges Other as its way of resisting dispersiveness (the undifferentiated) or the rule of science (the domestication of whatness). Awe opposes science on the basis that it smugly divides Being into areas that it then appropriates. i.e. that it lacks a strong sense of what is Other to it.<sup>21</sup> (Shortly we shall see however, that in a strange way awe also generates science or bureaucracy). Yet awe also opposes the theorist because he makes Other (as source of value) the source of influence rather than noumenal<sup>22</sup>. The theorist desires the pleasure of conversation i.e. the lively recovery of the ideas that re-enact speech as belonging with what is Other (its source in language).

Awe relates to Other by treating it as mystical or ineffable. Awe is a witness to something unspeakable and majestic: awe's typical emotion towards the majestic is fear. For the religious version of awe, the "fear of God" (of majesty) arises from a sense that His majesty

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21. See Blum, 1974, Ch.2, for a formulation of science's attitude to whatness.

22. In Kant's sense, See Kant, 1934, pp.180-191.



might not even permit one to live: for the sociologist who experiences awe towards the massive objectivity or enforceability of the social, his fear is perhaps an apprehension that the awesomeness of society makes it pointless for him to speak at all. Analytically, both versions fear the silence that the awesome (the enforceable) threatens to enforce. The awesome could render any speech in its presence (and typically, the awesome-God or society - is omnipresent ) irrelevant, meaningless or pointless<sup>23</sup>. Awe has the problem of producing a speech that is not irrelevant, meaningless, or pointless. The awed speaker imagines that any strong notion of responsibility is pre-empted by the power (majesty) of the awesome. Responsibility here means: being able to make a difference, or having a soul that has the capacity to choose worth. For the ideal speaker, it is the exercise of this responsibility that gives him the incentive to speak. For awe, however, this incentive cannot arise, since responsibility is seen as impossible. We suggest that instead, awe solves the problem of generating speech by speaking as a martyr. The root of the word "martyr" tells us that originally it meant "witness"<sup>24</sup>. We can think of a martyr as a fearful witness of the awesome. He wants to remain shocked by what he has seen. The martyr speaks out of a sense of resignation (as the antidote to the complacency of the unawed speaker). The martyr has already accepted fate as terroristic: somehow, he has been chosen, like Abraham, to bear the burden or the mark of being spoken to by the awesome. Awe's mistake is to treat that which terrorizes it as its fate, i.e. as its true calling or challenge to become what it is. Since awe is in fact engendered by the arbitrary and irrat-

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23. Novice sociology students who complain of the "pointlessness" of seminar discussion might be seen as being in awe of the social, and simply accepting the silence it reduces them to.

24. Chambers's, 1901.



ional power that terrorizes it, we can imagine that awe takes its bearings from a notion of the terroristic father. Awe lacks a good notion of authority because it imagines authority to be unlovable. For awe authority is fear-inspiring, majestic, terrible. Awe's problem is that it treats its fate as something externally and burdensomely imposed upon it: it fails to collect its talk around a notion of the intrinsic nature of our fatedness.

To say that our fate is intrinsic is not to say that its invention is merely a matter of each individual's subjective preference. Earlier we recalled that Socrates was spoken to by the Delphic oracle, given a sign from a source external to his individual self. Rather than merely being awed by the word of the oracle, Socrates tested it out in conversation to see if it was true. In spite of the authority of the oracle, Socrates would not merely passively accept what it told him, but sought to re-create its truth through his own conversation, not simply to confirm it, but to deepen it by finding out its true meaning. So the intrinsic nature of our fate has nothing to do with the source of the signs it gives us (i.e. whether these come from "inside" us or "outside" us), but rather with our need to live up to our fate, that is, our need to recover our collectedness with our fate. Our fate is strongly ours, because it requires us to become what we really are, to realize our strongest possibilities: as such it is truly Desirable. Living up to our fate (i.e. collecting our speech around what is truly compelling) resonates with inquiring into and doing what is most Desirable. The life of Desire is integrated with its fate whereas awe is estranged from (terrorized by) it. We can anticipate that this will have far-reaching consequences for the authoritative and compelling character of speech.

Awe speaks as a martyr because it centres its speech around its experience of constraint. To be awed by something is to be under sheer constraint to it because it is stronger. Analytically this results in speechlessness, in the sense of being incapable of making a difference, incapable of participating. Awe speaks as a martyr because it feels itself to be constrained. Its speech will respect the constraint out of which it is generated by speaking as a martyr, that is, by saying only what is permissible. As Kierkegaard would put it, awe will resist trying to tempt God. The theorist "tempts God" in that, by re-collecting source in speech, he seeks to demonstrate source's need for speech.

Now since what constrains us is also ineffable, it is impossible to be genuinely compelled (in speech) by it. To be truly constrained would be to be silent: yet this would leave the field open for speech that is unruled by awe. That is, mere silence might invite the theorist to usurp resource. When awe speaks as a martyr it also stipulates the possibilities for speech. Since to be truly constrained would result in silence, this means that speech is a kind of freedom. However, it is really the freedom of indifference, non-participation, estrangement from what is truly compelling. For example, the idea of value-freedom says that values must be eliminated because they are subjective and idiosyncratic. The mistake here is not the devaluation of the merely private, but rather the devaluation of value by treating it as if it were merely private. "Value-free" speech refers, then, to the decisive absence of what is valuable. Speech, after awe, gets divided into two realms: the "word of God" - or the miraculous poetry of the Scriptures to which Kierkegaard gives voice in some of his writing<sup>25</sup> - and the word of man, in which the truly compelling is not heard. For the awed speaker, value becomes un compelling. The reason for this is that the

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25. Kierkegaard Philosophical Fragments. See R.Bretall ed, 1946 pp.170-172.

experience of awe is like the famous River of Forgetfulness: awe forgets the centrality of our participation in what is compelling. Awe forgets that our source needs to be (become) Desirable to us. Without our participation in what is compelling, the latter is re-created as tyrannical or terroristic: the compelling is treated as alien power rather than authoritative source. Without the work of making source desirable to us, it simply burdens and exhausts us.

Awe's objection to the deep speaker is that he tries to enter a relation with what could only tyrannize us. The deep speaker conspires in the enslavement of man by trying to establish a speaking relationship where there could only be domination and one-sidedness. The deep speaker's pretence of relationship obscures what is actually tyranny. Since value could only tyrannize us (rather than influence us), awe will martyr itself - that is, refrain from speaking about the unspeakable and allow man the freedom to operate at "his own level". A famous example of the awesome is time, in St. Augustine's remark that although we all (think we) know very well what it is, as soon as we try to speak about it, it slips away from us. A defining feature of the mysterious is that it is always of the verge of "slipping away from us". Awe accents the awesome (e.g. time) by accenting this prohibition it places on speech. Awe accents its own death (in the sense that it can never teach but at best edify) because it is grounded on the notion that it is impossible for it to give an account (a logos) of its authority to its offspring. Awe is the father or nostalgia - which we might think of as its daughter - and bureaucracy - which we might think of as its son. Nostalgia and bureaucracy cohabit in an uneasy compromise in modernity.<sup>26</sup> Nostalgia is the guilty memory of

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26. Hence modernity, in our sense, is the "post-Christian" age, in that Christianity necessarily generates it as its successor. We might say, modernity is the split life of Christianity's offspring.

the dead parent, who after all did embody (a mysterious and terrible) authority, and bureaucracy is the speech that re-affirms the absence or death of authority, since the parent could not speak of his authority, or not in such a way as to make it Desirable or lovable. Nostalgia and bureaucracy are both collected around the problem of what is compelling for speech: in the absence of the authoritative, their notion of "why speak?" has to be resolved without a real reason, a reason that compels our deepest assent. Nostalgia and bureaucracy re-construct their sense of "why speak?" on the basis of dissatisfaction rather than the experience of consummation. Nostalgia looks back in the hope of finding the origin awe has denied it: bureaucracy speaks in the measure of man because it accepts awe's notion of Other's ineffability.

##### 5. Awe and the force of the compelling.

Because awe segregates and dichotomizes language and speech, it mis-conceives our relation to language. Because it forfeits any notion of the belonging together of speech and language, it remains incapable of re-collecting the idea of the compelling. For, if speech is outside of and essentially posterior to language, then language cannot be compelling in any strong sense. For language to be compelling, awe argues, it would have to compel us to speak in particular ways. Since unlimited ways of speaking are possible, that is, since language does not compel us to speak particularly in any way whatever, awe treats language as if it were undifferentiated, merely like a medium through which we speak. Language is weakened, now, into a medium or system that permits speech to occur but has no intrinsic relation to what speech says. This intrinsic relation, overlooked by awe, is that of source to utterance. The deep speaker seeks to treat this relation, not as enigmatic, but as an incentive to properly orient utterance to that to which it is related, its source.

It is as if awe insisted on language being an active agent, and when it does not comply, deciding that it must be merely a passive medium instead. Awe forgets the need to develop the Desire through which speech re-achieves the compelling character of what it has chosen to say by re-orienting its chosen usage towards the notion. Language does not compel us in the manner of an active agent; nor is it merely an abstract medium; rather it makes the demand that our speech re-call what compels it. We answer this demand by collecting ourselves to formulate the whatness of the ideas we resourcefully use. Speech faces the demand to show the Desirability of the particular ideas that make usages, in all their variety, possible. It must generate true particularity out of sheer variety.

Awe is the treatment of what is other than man as awesome. Awe says that only two possibilities exist concerning man's relation to his source: either he is awed, and hence silenced, by his source, or else he is separated, "freed" from it in the world of speech. Awe says that men are constrained to choose between paying silent homage to their source or else speaking in its absence. We could understand modernity as imagining itself to face the dilemma, in choosing to speak, of whether to lament or simply ratify the absence of source.

Because neither awe nor the "free speech" that is adrift from source engage in the work of particularizing, they share an abstract notion of source. Source is treated as awesome when it is thought that its necessary yet insufficient character is something to be passively accepted. Source is necessary in that it makes possible any action or speech whatever: yet it is insufficient in that, in itself, it does not generate particular speeches or actions. Whatever is said or done owes its possibility to its source in language, yet it is not determined

in its particular character by what founds it. We treat this situation not as awesome, but rather as the need for work. Work wants to turn this situation into a Desirable one by accepting its necessity as the opportunity to develop Desire. The ideal speaker works because he wants to develop Desire. This means that his work is oriented towards particularizing a strong sense of what is necessary to him. The necessity of source is not (as awe imagines) an index of insufficiency but rather the openness that demands us to re-collect a sense of what is sufficient. Abstract necessity needs work in order to be developed. The uncoerciveness of source is the origin of our Desire to develop its necessity into our grasp of our need for what suffices. Our particularized and developed Desire will develop our grasp of what is necessary for us. Desire points to man's need to work as a continuous measure of what he is. The work man needs to do is to recover the compelling character of his source by particularizing its influence.

Awe treats source as un compelling in that its necessary but insufficient character is taken to brook no further intervention. Our source can coerce us (when we are awed by it) but it cannot compel us. Coercion is one-way: it works on something externally, enforcing something upon it. The person who is coerced acts or speaks in a way that he experiences as originating outside himself: he remains separated from it to the extent that he feels merely coerced. He is not participating in his own speech. For awe, since the source is coercive, it cannot be decisively oriented to. Awe treats source as un compelling because it does not drive us to particularize in any specific way. Source is un compelling because it does not drive together speech and



language: it merely coerces our silence. This is how awe, as we saw earlier, expects the source of speech to be an active agent. Instead, the ideal speaker wants a notion of the compelling that makes a demand upon the speaker's responsibility. The source does not bequeath its compelling character, but demands the enactment of Desire as the speaker's work of developing what truly compels him.

Awe treats source as coercive (extrinsic) rather than compelling (intrinsic), yet it does not generate any particular speeches or actions. Particular speeches or actions, then, depend on a kind of separation from source, the separation of freedom, yet also the separation of ignorance. Awe says that the freedom to speak depends on a kind of ignorance. It treats the speaker as one who has forfeited his possible interest in his source. Garfinkel, for example, writes:

"One matter....is excluded from (members') interests: practical actions and practical circumstances are not in themselves a topic, let alone a sole topic of their inquiries". 27

Members take the "awesome phenomenon" of the accomplishment of social structure for granted. "Members take for granted that a member must at the outset "know" the settings in which he is to operate" (p.8). That is, members take whatever knowledge it is that membership consists of for granted. Membership is that which takes it-self for granted.

The member's ignorance implies, for awe, that he is not compelled by his source. The member speaks out of his disinterest in the source, his ignorance that is also his freedom. This means, above all, that the member is seen as artful. Ethnomethodology will show that common sense, far from being a world of externally determined "dopes", artfully re-produces itself from moment to moment. Against the sophist's

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27. Garfinkel, 1967, p.7. Subsequent references in this discussion are to page numbers.



appeal to nature, to the beast in man, ethnomethodology reminds us of convention, the artist in man. Convention is not a veneer (as the sophist imagines) but rather the necessary and artful work required in order to speak at all. To speak is to be artful: it is to artfully orient to what is enforceable (convention). Men say what they want, but with the rider that what they "want" they can only imagine within the parameters of the enforceably "accountable-for-all-practical-purposes" (p.9).

Awe says that source is not compelling by treating it as a set of parameters within which members artfully operate - although their interest is not in their limits but only in the "practical purposes" for the sake of which they are continuously accountable, and continuously make themselves accountable. Awe forgets how the source could be compelling by forgetting how it could make a demand on the speaker. Thus, for awe, the source is abstract in that it requires a self-disinterested artfulness: whereas for the strong speaker, the source is demanding in that it requires a self-reflective nurturance of Desire for its beneficial influence. The ideal speaker needs more than a notion of artful orientation to our foundations, for this is (still) to treat our relation to source as extrinsic rather than intrinsic. Our relation to source is what is meant by fate: the ideal speaker develops a strong notion of his collectedness with his fate. He seeks to express principled rather than merely artful orientation. To be oriented in a principled way is to be oriented to our need to collect ourselves with our fate. We become decisive towards our fate when we elect to re-achieve its compelling character by seeking for what is intrinsic. We express our love of our fate by bringing together our enjoyment of our speech with our sense of answering its demand.

## 6. Awe, convention and enthusiasm.

The theorist Desires to give embodiment to his strong relation to source. He wants to represent his grasp of man's collectedness with his fate. Desire has introduced us to the idea of what is compelling for us. Where awe experiences fate as coercion, Desire re-appropriates it as compelling. We need to ask - what is it that is compelling for us? As a beginning we can say that what is compelling is our expression of what we truly are. What we truly are is our innermost necessity.

Because the ideal speaker enjoys Desire as the pleasure of developing what he really is, he develops a strong idea of acknowledgement. The deep speaker acknowledges language as the source of speech: that is, he acknowledges speech's dependency on language. The account he aims for seeks to be a true account by re-orienting the dependency of the speech at hand on language. To acknowledge language means to submit our speech to the demand of language. Desire always wants to keep itself alive. Desire enjoys the gifts of language (rather than being in awe of them) because this enjoyment is its way of sustaining itself. Desire's speech gives it access to the Desire of the source. The source is just because it Desires conversational re-enactment rather than merely enforced rule-following. The source compels assent not as the brutal arbitrary tyrant does, externally, but rather, intrinsically. That is, to acknowledge the source requires not awed piety but rather the enjoyment of its Desire. There is no other way to truly acknowledge language, because awe prevents us from grasping the justice of source. Desire's acknowledgement is oriented to its grasp that the gift is not given gratuitously: Desire must qualify the speaker to accept (that is work) in order to be capable of receiving it.

Awe, rather than acknowledging language, experiences a submergence or overwhelming in the face of source which renders it inarticulate. For instance, it speaks abstractly of Truth in a way that renders it unbelievable. Because awe re-constructs source as tyrannical it experiences a barrier to the achievement of conviction. For awe, the phenomenon of speech is like the impossible birth of justice from out of the unjust. The idea of embodying justice (of just speech) is unbelievable for awe.

Dependency itself needs to be oriented (decisive). Because awe mistakes the authoritative for the tyrannical, its dependency is unoriented. To say it is unoriented is to say that it fails to re-achieve for itself the justice of source. Earlier we spoke of modernity as the offspring of awe. Now we can understand where the roots of this idea lie: in the fact that modernity lacks a notion of oriented dependency. Power is understood by the modern as what creates and simultaneously corrupts: that is, it is understood as injustice. Modernity's questions are concerned with the mechanisms of power, exchange, zero-sum conflict, losses offsetting gains. Because of these preoccupations, modernity is ashamed of the idea of dependency, because this implies a more powerful, necessarily corrupt, alter, i.e. it implies injustice. Acknowledgement of dependency sounds to it like slavishness. The modern considers Desire or love of language to be a ratification of injustice. To Desire is to lose one's head. Keeping one's head means keeping one's distance from the encounter with language, i.e. refusing to acknowledge language.

Awe, by segregating source from convention, says that for man's speech, convention is first. It protects us from the tyranny of brute force, "nature", i.e. from the sophist, by telling speakers that con-

vention, not nature, is compelling. Again, awe rejects the theorist not only because he risks convention, but because, as we see now, he seems to ratify injustice or slavishness. The theorist is imprudent. In the face of the sophist on one side and the theorist on the other, awe and its offspring offer protection and prudence.

The theorist orients to that which is deeper than convention and is needed to animate convention: he orients to what is compelling. It is through this orientation to the Ideas with which speech is pregnant that the ideal speaker develons his Desire. The ideal speaker is compelled by whatness rather than convention, yet this does not mean that he laments the need for convention. The ideal speaker accepts the fact that what he says could be said in another way<sup>28</sup>. He accepts the necessity of convention for the address of whatness, yet understands that this necessity alone is not the strongly compelling need. Convention needs to be strongly oriented or animated through the influence of what compels us. Convention needs enthusiasm.

Awe is unenthusiastic because it equates enthusiasm with freedom, mobility, self-assertiveness - the opposites of the experience of being overwhelmed (awe). So awe finds difficulty in attributing any good to enthusiasm. We can begin to teach awe, then, by asking it to reflect on the best of enthusiasm, or on the place of enthusiasm in the theorist's speech. Enthusiasm is the capacity of speakers to be motivated by the compelling source. To be motivated resonates with the idea of being brought to life, finding one's real resources, by wanting to articulate and express the truly compelling. The ideal

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28. Special acknowledgement is due to Alan Blum and Peter McHugh for my sense of the problem of convention here.

speaker consummates his Desire in the exercise of this want. So it is the intrinsic connection between enthusiasm and the compelling that reveals enthusiasm as a speaker's deep need. Enthusiasm is our living intimately with what compels us. Man's relation with what is compelling sustains itself in enthusiasm because in enthusiasm it is continuously exercised. Enthusiasm, by involving the speaker in the development of the Idea, allows the speaker to befriend the intrinsic and accountable character of what enthuses him.

We can develop our grasp of the need for enthusiasm by examining the notions of authorship generated by awe and enthusiasm. Earlier we spoke of two versions of awe, the "religious" and the "sociological". What collected them was their failure to re-construct speech as a course of action that makes a difference. Now we can ask: what are we glossing with these two versions of awe?

This question returns us to the opening part of this essay. The problem of irony, we recall, emerged as the question of our relation to nature and our relation to convention. That is, it emerged as the question of the integration of temperance and justice. Throughout our essay the achievement of temperance and the achievement of justice have been closely bound together. The demand for justice (anger) was shown to require temperance or irony towards nature. As we saw, to go beyond rage and remorse, to speak strongly, required an ironic relation to physiology. Temperance educates justice by transforming it from exegesis (born out of intemperate meddling) into genuine justice. We have sought to show what temperance is and how it inherits resource. Yet, as we can see, what remains is the question: what is "genuine justice"?

We can pose this question in a more urgent way by considering the work of the present chapter. Having attempted to demonstrate tem-

perance's need for resourcefulness, or the development of its Desire, we have been faced here with awe's challenge to this notion. We have sought to show that awe's problem is the lack of enthusiasm that results from its treatment of Other as extrinsic and coercive. Yet awe claims that it undergoes a more genuine and authentic experience with source than the "merely" speaking, "merely" resourceful, theorist. Awe sees itself as being closer to the source than the "proud" theorist who, in electing to speak in a way that orients to source, shows his desire to "tempt God". Awe sees the oriented motion of the theorist as a vain imitation of celestial (God-like) motion. Awe says that men ought to move in relation to their earthly existence (i.e. in quest of food, shelter, or worldly pleasures) but in no other way at all. The only alternative to earthly motion is the immobility of awe: this is the "higher alternative" that is not of this world. Earthly motion - which for Kierkegaard includes all thinking and reflection on the Ideas - is of this world. It is this-worldly and nothing else. It is the discourse of nostalgia or of competence (bureaucracy).

So we see that, just as temperance and justice are intimately bound together, so the exegetic version of justice is ratified and sustained - by awe itself. If awe seems to dwell closely to temperance - since it resonates, like temperance, with a certain composure or oneness with its source - it also seems to be a peculiarly deceptive temperance. Awe as a version of temperance has not resolved the problem of justice, since (indirectly) it generates exegesis or bureaucracy. Temperance, then, needs to be educated by justice: for otherwise, a certain inertia (awe) that is perhaps "natural" to it assumes dominance. Our final chapter will aim to develop this notion.

Here, we seek to provide for how awe construes authorship and in what sense this is unjust. How does awe generate (its own) speech and what kind of speech is it? Earlier, we said that awe speaks as a martyr: now we can examine more closely, with respect to the problem of justice, the particular ways which lead to its self-sacrifice. Now if awe is immobility and silent mystique in the presence of its source, this means that awe naturalizes source. Awe treats source as an external power (as we have seen): this means that it treats source as a natural phenomenon. Source is natural in that, like nature, it exists (prior to all human rationalization) as an in itself. The in itself has no necessary relation to value, and the for itself (speech) which creates or invents value has no intrinsic relation to source. Awe is always essentially awe of nature inasmuch as it naturalizes its object.

Awe treats self-exegesis as complacent, not because it sees it as unreflective, but because self-exegesis imagines that nature speaks. Self-exegesis (like positivism) imagines that nature speaks directly through it. The difference here is between the "naturalism" of self-exegesis and awe's attitude to nature. Naturalism is perfectly matter of fact with its speech. Self-exegesis does not see itself as being conventional (i.e. what could be otherwise) but rather, natural (i.e. what is given). So, whereas awe is immobile in the presence of its naturalized object, self-exegesis treats its very motion as (the image of) nature. Yet awe does not seek to educate the enthusiasm in self-exegesis but instead leaves self-exegesis as it is even though it claims to know better. We have already seen the reason for this. Awe accepts the ineducability of self-exegesis because exegesis (earthly speech) is no more or less than awe's notion of justice. "Human justice"



as exegesis is accented by awe even though it has forgotten its own awesomeness. Awe as the split life is the unwillingness to acknowledge the theorist's need for justice.

Consider now what we called the "religious" version of awe, exemplified by Kierkegaard. We accepted the common-sense notion of religion in our account, because of Kierkegaard's appeal to God, faith, and so on. Yet we must now go beyond this: it is not enough simply to call Kierkegaard "religious". The decisive point is that Kierkegaard naturalizes the so-called object of religious veneration, God. God is Kierkegaard's metaphor for all the power and all the mystery that precedes man. His real point is that, because of this precedence, the only attitude open to man is awe. Any other attitude is a denial of the precedence of what precedes man.

Since what precedes man is utterly without reason, or at least utterly precedes reason, it cannot be accounted for or grasped within speech. Yet this does not stop Kierkegaard from referring to God on a great number of occasions. Speech cannot particularize God's firstness - yet it can, and must, express its faith that God particularized His firstness. God did what speech cannot do by ordaining the coming into history of the divine. Christ made the Logos flesh: Christ saves man because man can now realize that God particularized value even though speech (man) cannot. Man must rely on and have faith in what takes precedence. Man must believe, in the face of all its absurdity, that God (who takes precedence) achieved the utterly irrational by releasing the divine into the realm of rational discourse. Discourse in its mere rationality could not give body to what takes precedence - because only that which transcends reason can achieve the meta-rational. Man (the rational animal, the speaker) must transcend himself in faith<sup>29</sup>.

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29. This discussion draws on Sartre's essay on Kierkegaard; see J.P. Sartre "The Singular Universal", in J. Thompson, ed, 1972.

Thus man must believe precisely because of the absurdity of Christ. To transcend mere rationality requires the active choice of the absurd. We have already examined the artifice of this passion as well as its martyrdom. Now we can say: the sense of nobility of this passion expresses itself as heroism. Since source and speech are decisively Other, man (the speaker) ennobles himself by purging speech (the pretensions of reason) from his soul and thus making room for the sheer heroism of faith. Sheer heroism is faith in defiance of its own absurdity, faith because of its own unaccountability. It is faith in faith itself regardless of the decisive absence of any possible human grasp of the good of faith, the point of faith, the benefit of faith.

This enables us to grasp why the story of Abraham exercises Kierkegaard so strongly. The God to whom Abraham gives his devotion asks him to sacrifice his own offspring. This anticipates awe's story vividly. The source to which awe devotes itself requires of awe that it sacrifice the possibility of offspring or speech. Awe may speak, but as we have seen, it cannot embody within its own speech the authority of its speech. And ultimately, if it continues to sacrifice its offspring, it ends by martyring itself in the face of its offsprings' insistence on speaking. For the failure of authority in awe generates either regret for its demise, or exegetic justice. Awe's failure of authority is shown in its inability to generate offspring who could acknowledge and develop its influence (rather than lament it or forget it).

Kierkegaard's unhappiness, like Abraham's unhappiness, with all its nobility of bearing, is the resoluteness of their belief in the inadequacy of speech (of man). Kierkegaard's unhappiness is that, at

the last, when everything is weighed up, he thinks he is condemned to a useless speaking. For some, this would be a totally shattering experience. This would result if worthwhile speaking were thought to be attainable by others but not oneself. Kierkegaard, however, believes in the inadequacy of speech: this is a special insight, not achieved by many, so it has a sense of its own nobility. This sense of nobility means that Kierkegaard sees the inadequacy of speech as something to remember and hold on to always. An added dimension of awe's immobility now enters. There is, beyond mere immobility, a fixity of attitude that it generates from its unhappiness and the nobility it attributes to this. Awe becomes unhappy when man's diminutiveness compared with what takes precedence assumes the form of inadequacy. Awe fixes itself in its unhappiness when it scorns the only possible justice (the justice of its exegetic offspring) as being pathetic or worthless. Kierkegaard's suffering thus results from his idea that justice is impossible.

Justice is seen as impossible because awe, here, must submit totally to the injustice of Other. Like Abraham, awe must give to Other the right to demand the irrational (and hence completely unjust) sacrifice of its own offspring. Total submission requires at least the acceptance of the possibility of total injustice. For us, what Kierkegaard's suffering shows is man's deep need for justice.

When we turn to our "sociological" version of awe, we see that for Garfinkel there is no question of comparing speech to source in terms of adequacy. Here again we have the task of going beyond a mere designation, this time of Garfinkel as "sociological". Again, we will pursue this end by inquiring into "sociological" awe's notion of authorship. A clue is provided (as it was with Kierkegaard) by considering the kind of artifice it involves. Whereas Kierkegaard, in order to

speak (in the face of the inadequacy of speech) required a heroism of faith, Garfinkel will use the artifice of technique. This is because it is self-exegesis itself which is an awesome achievement of obscure but "obstinate" technique or procedure. We recall Garfinkel's comment: "For Kant the moral order "within" was an awesome mystery; for sociologists the moral order "without" is a technical mystery".<sup>30</sup>

Garfinkel, then, does not compare speech to source in terms of adequacy, since it is speech (self-exegesis) itself that is awesome. Notice here that Garfinkel's idea of speech is self-exegesis (or intelligibility): we will need to address this issue shortly. For now, the point is that Garfinkel does not treat convention as inadequate - on the contrary, he defends its adequacy against the slights of positivism - but instead naturalizes convention itself as the object of awe. As we have seen, however, convention "naturalizes" itself - but in the very different sense of taking itself for granted. Convention (in the sense of self-exegesis) imagines that its speeches and actions are given or natural to it. Although they could be otherwise, this would be unnatural. This belief encourages self-exegesis to take itself for granted. Yet there are those who would attack self-exegesis because everyday speech is not "naturalistic" enough.

Positivism says that nature does not speak through the mouth-piece of mundane activities because, unknown to self-exegesis, other motives distort its naturalism. These motives - subjective desire, preference, and so on - belong unanimously to the post-natural world of human "interpretation". While human desires are naturalistic, interpretation (in its tendency to deny this through idealization) often is not. A special kind of interpretation, or rather, an elimina-

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30. Garfinkel, 1967 p.35.

tion of interpretation, is necessary in order to let nature speak. This elimination of interpretation is positivism.<sup>31</sup>

Garfinkel defends self-exegesis against those who would attack it. What inspires him to do this is his idea that self-exegesis tends to underestimate itself. It undervalues itself in that it treats itself as a mere phenomenon rather than as an achievement. Here, what is strange is that although Garfinkel says that convention is not merely a natural phenomenon, this leads to the very awe of it that, as it were, naturalizes it again. Our problem now is: how can we resolve this strangeness into a more telling grasp of "sociological" awe?

For Garfinkel, what is awesome is not nature per se, but rather, given the opaqueness and oracularity of nature, that speech is possible at all. The member lives in the midst of meaningless nature, and makes utterances that are always indexical: yet he speaks meaningfully. The point here is not the celebration of the symbol, but rather, the specificity of the symbol. The member always construes his speech, and enforces other's self-same construal of his speech, as being recognizable. It is specifically about something, and what that something is is enforceable. As Garfinkel puts it:

"Persons require.....properties of discourse as conditions under which they are themselves entitled and entitle others to claim that they know what they are talking about, and that what they are saying is understandable and ought to be understood".<sup>32</sup>

For Garfinkel, as for Kierkegaard, there is a split between nature and artfulness (convention). In a very important sense, Garfinkel agrees with the positivist that self-exegesis is often not naturalist.

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31. See McHugh, Raffel, Foss and Blum, 1974, Ch.3.

32. Garfinkel, 1967, pp.41-42, my emphasis.

In fact, Garfinkel radicalizes this insight by extending it to all speech - including the positivist's. The positivist's speech, far from replicating nature, is only intelligible within the conventionally organized set of procedures that make up its life-world, its set of relevances, and so on. Yet man's artfulness is no longer, as it was for Kierkegaard, inadequate: on the contrary, the exact opposite is the case. What is awesome is that, in the face of nature's decisive inability to speak, despite the mere permissiveness of nature (that which precedes convention), everyday life in all its enforceability has emerged and stands before us as our genuine phenomenon for inquiry. Garfinkel's defence of self-exegesis from the positivist arises because he considers the positivist either impossible or redundant. If the positivist claims to replicate nature, Garfinkel will reply that this is impossible: for the positivist speaks, and there is a split between speech (our common life-world) and nature. And if the positivist claims to at least speak systematically, Garfinkel will reply that this is redundant, for self-exegesis is already awesomely artful, procedural, and organized.

Garfinkel's denial of (the need for) the positivist can be grasped as a claim that a special, unusually rigorous, exegesis, is not required. We do not need a separate, in the sense of an exceptionally insightful or rigorous, speech. The reason for this is simple and yet utterly fundamental: it is because self-exegesis already makes perfectly visible whatever we/it needs to grasp. There is no possible remedy for the multitude of ad hoc methods and procedures through which self-exegesis documents itself. Much more importantly: there is absolutely no need for one.



For us, the weight of Garfinkel rests in his claim, in effect, that no special procedures for the achievement of justice are either possible or necessary: because self-exegesis already meets the requirements of justice.<sup>33</sup> As has already been implied, this makes for a certain uneasiness or ambivalence on Garfinkel's own part about the status of his own speech. Clearly, it is not self-exegesis: it could not itself be understood by any reader as enforceable in any member's conversation. Does this render it nonsensical? Is Garfinkel merely an instance of the failure to comply?

In some sense, we would have to simply accept this. Yet Garfinkel is much more than such a failure. For his failure, it is very clear to us, has been self-generated: none more than Garfinkel has sought to convince us of the very enforceability whose limits he is forced to overstep in order precisely to do so. If Garfinkel, in this sense, martyrs himself, it is no longer because of the paltriness of a justice he cannot subscribe to, but for the very opposite reason. He does it for the sake of a justice he very much believes in, and for the sake of instructing us of it: the justice of self-exegesis or convention.

The ambivalence of Garfinkel is his notion that it is necessary to martyr himself in order to do justice to self-exegesis - that is, in order to do justice to justice<sup>34</sup>. Somehow, it is impossible to do justice to justice, that is, it is impossible for justice to speak about itself. The reason for this is crucial: justice cannot speak about itself any more than exegesis can. It is of the nature of exegesis that it makes objects visible. It provides for us a tangible world of known and recognized shapes, through discourse. The notion

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33. Usage for my claim is provided by Garfinkel, 1967, Ch.4: "Some rules of correct decision making that jurors respect".

34. This idea recalls Kierkegaard's problem of "faith in faith", or heroism.



of self-exegesis, then, does not mean self-expression (or accounting and providing for the self in a reflective way) but instead, as we have seen, the presentation of self as a naturalistic phenomenon. Self-exegesis makes assurances but does not reflect upon itself.

Garfinkel's ambivalence concerns the possibility of temperance. If temperance, as we have seen, involves the consummation of Desire, we have also shown its resourceful inheritance that uses the conventional but is not merely co-terminous with it. Temperance is resourceful but not simply self-exegetic. Yet Garfinkel shows, in his response to the "uninteresting" essential reflexivity of accounts, his ambivalence towards temperance. As we have seen (p.210, n.27, above), members are "uninterested" in giving accounts of the routine grounds of their own practical actions. Exegetic justice is uninterested in speaking about itself. Our problem is to formulate a response to this.

Garfinkel responds as follows:

"To say (members) are "not interested" in the study of practical actions is not to complain, nor to point to an opportunity they miss, nor is it a disclosure of error, nor is it an ironic comment". 35

Garfinkel's unwillingness to ironize convention here shows us his notion of justice as necessarily exegetic. Yet exegetic justice is essentially the fruit of intemperance. Garfinkel's doubt, then, is directed at the possibility of temperance. Garfinkel is suggesting that temperance is impossible, and that as a result, the only justice is exegetic justice. The risk of irony towards convention remains for him a risk not worth taking. For us, what Garfinkel's ambivalence shows is man's deep need for irony.

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35. Garfinkel, 1967, p.8. Also cited in Blum and McHugh, Self-Reflection in the Arts and Sciences, on whom the discussion draws considerably at this point.

The need for enthusiasm has thus been strengthened to the need for justice. Our task, in formulating a response to exegetic justice, is to draw upon the temperance whose notion we developed earlier, to provide for an irony and a conclusiveness in justice that will educate the exegete. We seek not simply to convince, but to provide for conviction.

## CHAPTER SIX

FROM ABSTRACT TO SPIRITED NECESSITY1. Conclusiveness and the problem of temperance and nature.

"Machiavelli's arguments, for example, were substantial enough for their subject, yet they were quite easy to contest; and his opponents have left their own just as open to confutation. In that kind of argument there will always be matter for answers and rejoinders, double, triple and quadruple, and for that endless fabric of debates which our lawyers drag out to the uttermost in the making of their pleas: "We are beaten, and rain as many blows on the enemy" (Horace); for our arguments have little foundation except that of experience, and the variety of human events furnishes us with infinite examples of every possible kind".

MONTAIGNE, *On Presumption*,  
Essays, Book 2, 17.

A danger for theorizing, Montaigne can be taken to suggest, is that it might lack foundation. Its argument might move this way or that, in a way that is "substantial enough for its subject", yet whichever way it moves, it might have been otherwise. There is enough reason at all times to argue for this or for that: of two opposite courses of action, each probably has as many reasons to support it as the other<sup>1</sup>. The only foundation for reasons and arguments, it seems, is experience: yet experience seems to be incapable of providing a standard, since it is unlimited and infinite in its possibilities. Even within my own experience there are many contradictory examples, and between my own and that of others, the differences seem greater still.

Montaigne's problem is ours too in that we wish at the conclusion of our work to take the opportunity to reflect upon the necessity of the particular engagement it displays. Any work is accountable to the question: how is this work necessary (as an instance of its Desire) rather than arbitrary or indifferent? How does the writer show his

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1. See Montaigne, "On the Uncertainty of our Judgement", Essays, Book 1, 47. In Montaigne, 1958.

commitment to producing a work that is necessary to the expression of his desire? For without this necessity, we would be bequeathed a work whose arguments are "quite easy to contest", and whose examples are randomly selected from the infinity of "every possible kind". The work would invite, instead of collaborative reflection on the questions it bears upon, mere rejoinders, "double, triple and quadruple". Perhaps the greatest rejoinder a work could invite is the direct objection: all of this work might as well have been otherwise, for ultimately it provides only for indifference to its having chosen the way it did. The rejoinder would say: this work generates indifference because it is itself indifferent to the choices it made.

Our reflection, then, must turn towards a notion of the ideal speaker as a conclusive speaker. A conclusive speaker is one who orients comfortably towards the notion that his speech is a recommendation or potential influence. The conclusive speaker puts into effect the recommendable character of the truth he has attained. What is unshakably true for our ideal speaker is the need for worth as the need that has greatest priority. To become conclusive is, for him, to be moved by what is unshakable: to be animated to speak by what is necessary for him. To become conclusive is to re-present what is necessary for him - his unshakable conviction - in what he says and does. The conclusive speaker brings into harmony motion and the unshakable by moving in a way that re-presents the necessity of what is unshakable. His spirit - the absolute necessity of what is unshakable for him - generates his particular practices and lives through his particular movements. Abstract necessity sees itself as bestowing life upon practices as if these already existed, somehow, in an otherwise inanimate and unspirited way. It seeks practices to which it retrospec-

tively tries to give the "kiss of life". Spirited necessity however acts on its grasp of the unshakable and its motions are generated from within this grasp and answer to it.

The ideal speaker we are developing is one for whom what is unshakable is his need to answer to the demand for worth. This need to answer is the need to be conclusive, that is, the need to bring motion and the unshakable need it answers to (the need for worth) into harmony. To bring motion and the unshakable into harmony is to become a speaker whose movements form and organize a true response to what is needed. Our ideal speaker knows what he needs and expresses what he needs in the composure of his speech. His speech expresses his Desire. Now we want to ask: what virtue does Desire need to truly compose it?

Desire wants the harmony of motion and the unshakable, and so the speaker asks: what do I need in order to compose the harmony of motion and the unshakable? This is the question we see as lying at the heart of The Charmides. In the conversation, Socrates is instructing the two cousins who need to learn to integrate their motions (their speeches and acts) with what is integral or unshakable for them. Socrates is instructing them in the virtue that is appropriate for this development. As we have already seen, they speak throughout the dialogue about the nature of sophrosyne, or temperance.

Critias tends to be intemperate in that, throughout the dialogue, he is very uncentred and vacillating. On several occasions he attempts to completely change track and start again on a new footing. He seems clever rather than spirited because there is a disunity between his movements and whatever it is that is unshakable for him (his true

interest). Part of the problem, of course, is that his vacillation makes it hard to see just what his true interest actually is. What is unshakable for him is inarticulate (it has not developed articulation, and hence has remained immature) and so what he does articulate does not address or express his centre. His speech displays an interest in intelligence or being clever, yet this interest is shakable in that Critias is not deeply convinced of it.

Critias is not convinced of his interest in intelligence because deeply, intelligence itself does not answer to the requirements of an unshakable (rather than a shakable) interest. Intelligence is incapable of being transformed from a preference into a conviction, because a conviction requires spirit. That is, a conviction must partake of a necessity that answers to real needs rather than ego's preference. Conviction involves matters crucial and central to spirit, rather than merely calculable or rationalizable ones. So it is impossible to be unshakably convinced of the priority of intelligence (though of course it is possible, as Critias does, to believe in it) because sheer intelligence is unspirited. The necessity sought by intelligence in its accounts is (merely) logical rather than deep. The logic of intelligence is instrumental and given to the pursuit of individualism in the manner of Critias. For us, the most intelligent attitude in this sense is the liberal utilitarianism on which modern individualism is premised. The utilitarian community is ruled by calculation, consistency, and relationships between discrete elements. It is intemperate in the very way Critias is: its motion is uncentred on anything unshakable. The utilitarian community is unspirited because it abstracts from the whole, the unshakable conviction that would enable it to move rather than vacillate.

Critias is intemperate in that his interest in motion is not centred on an unshakable conviction. His interest is not genuinely spirited. Hence he vacillates. Because his movement does not express anything deep for him, because it does not resolve anything for him, he repeatedly wants to begin again. Critias does not temper his motion with a true necessity: instead he merely controls it (or struggles to keep it from getting out of hand) through the necessities of logic and intelligence. Critias needs to recover the spirit that animates him by becoming temperate.

But what of Charmides? In what way is consideration of temperance necessary for him? A striking difference between Charmides and Critias is that whereas Critias' intemperance is the first thing we notice about him, whether or not Charmides is temperate is the hardest thing of all to determine. Charmides at least seems to be closer to temperance than Critias is: this surfaces in the way Socrates questions him, early in their conversation. Socrates requests of Charmides:

"Please, therefore, to inform me whether you admit the truth of what Critias has been saying;- have you or have you not this quality of sophrosyne ?" (158c)

The doubt about the answer to this question is genuine in a way that it could not be for Critias. To anticipate a little: Socrates' direct question raises the problem - what answer would be justified? What is the just answer to this question? A centrally important matter here is that the temperate man is entitled to answer the question differently from the intemperate man yet it is the intemperate man who will be more inclined to say "Yes, certainly, I have this quality of temperance". This puts the temperate man (or the man who genuinely aspires to temperance) into a quandary - even after he has got over the temptation to agonize about the question "Am I or am I not temperate?" The speaker



who wants to be temperate overcomes this destructive preoccupation by seeking to answer as if he were temperate: he is interested in answering as the temperate man would answer. Yet here is the quandary: how would the temperate man answer?

Is Charmides' answer temperate? Socrates tells us that in response to the question,

"Charmides blushed, and the blush heightened his beauty, for modesty is becoming in youth; he then made the graceful reply that he really could not at once answer, either yes or no, to the question which I had asked: For, said he, if I affirm that I am not temperate, that would be a strange thing for me to say against myself, and also I should give the lie to Critias, and to many others who (according to him) think that I am temperate: but, on the other hand, if I say that I am, I shall have to praise myself, which would be ill manners; and therefore I do not know how to answer you". (158c-d)

This reply shows us Plato at his most evocative and telling, for it reveals to us a marvellously touching and poignant portrait of Charmides the youth. In these words we ourselves feel, without seeing Charmides, all of the effects of his beauty. We ourselves, like Socrates, on experiencing these words, take the flame and might no longer be able to contain ourselves. Charmides' response re-presents beauty and youthfulness: it is as Socrates remarks, graceful. Yet is it temperate? Or better: has temperance (whether or not Charmides himself is temperate) justified itself in these words of Charmides? Has temperance done itself justice: has it realized a true expression of itself, in a way that is neither boastful nor retiring but - just? This is temperance's quandary: how to live in harmony with justice. To answer "yes" to the question seems to make one indistinguishable from the intemperate man (because it seems boastful): yet to answer "no" is a way of estranging oneself (as Charmides in effect puts it) because it orients to conceal-

ing rather than expressing the self. Temperance's quandary is that no matter which of the two replies it gives, it fails to become just (to justify itself). To be just, now, is to move in a spirited way, that is, in a way that truly responds to the unshakable conviction that one's movement centres on. Neither "yes" nor "no" achieve justice because boasting ("yes") orients to a preference for the self whereas retiring ("no") forgets the self's need to move (to express itself). Why is temperance in a quandary - of all things, in relation to one of the other virtues, justice? Don't the virtues naturally harmonize well together? Could it be that temperance is in a quandary about justice because - an arresting thought - it is actually tempted by injustice?

At any rate it is clear that Charmides is made of very different stuff from Critias. Whereas Critias is meddlesome and boastful, Charmides shows in his reply that he is modest and graceful. Where Critias is always trying out new guises but reveals in the way he does this a lack of depth, Charmides' reticence seems to suggest a centre, inarticulate to be sure, but deserving of respect and perhaps affection. That is, Charmides' reticence is somehow engendered by what is unshakable in him, whereas Critias' garrulousness seems to deliberately evade the question of his true need. Charmides seems to be willing to suffer himself (this is perhaps a better reading of his headache) whereas Critias merely runs away from himself. Charmides suffers his inability to speak for himself, as the idiom puts it: he is one of those who, we imagine, is silenced by boisterous company. Yet even in the presence of responsive and sympathetic listeners, Charmides has difficulty: Socrates at one point tells us that "at first he hesitated, and was not very willing to answer" (159b). We

imagine that even when alone, Charmides has difficulty in "speaking for himself", in articulating for himself what he is. He encounters his nature as unfathomable and mysterious.

Nature, indeed, has endowed Charmides with beauty, grace and modesty. All who encounter him find him marvellous. How does Charmides orient to his natural grace? Before replying, he blushes: that is, when he reflects upon himself, he is affected by himself. Even when the one who attends to Charmides is himself, that one is overcome by something (he blushes). He blushes rather than marvels because his modesty prevents him from marvelling at himself. So Charmides is a speaker who has difficulty in orienting towards himself: he is embarrassed by the practice of objectifying himself (e.g. for the sake of reflection). His modesty is making it difficult for him to reflect on his own temperance: he is too embarrassed to think. In response to Socrates' question "what is temperance?" Charmides finds it difficult to get started at all. In contrast to Critias, who begins again whenever he encounters difficulties, Charmides dreads having to make a new start. Critias uses his new beginnings to evade and cover over his embarrassment at failing to develop: Charmides on the other hand is usually prevented by his embarrassment from embarking on self-expression at all.

What is the problem here? The answer is suggested by Socrates' remark in response to Charmides' blush and graceful reply: he says, "that is a natural reply, Charmides" (158d). Not only is Charmides fortunately endowed by nature: even his speech is natural. His speech replicates the good fortune, the easy grace and charm, that he already possesses: even in his very discomfort, Charmides can't help being charming, it seems.

Charmides is an example of what we call "a natural". One who is fortunately endowed by nature, with beauty, charm or talent, is tempted to merely feel indebted to nature. Not yet having realized the difference between the fortuitous character of nature's endowment and the decisive character of true generosity, the natural is one who imagines that nature has been generous to him and hence deserves homage and gratitude. In this respect, Charmides is utterly different from the naturalism of self-exegesis. Whereas self-exegesis views itself as typical and unexceptional, Charmides sees himself as exceptionally endowed. His awareness of the awe he generates in others tempts him into including himself within what awes him. (This also differentiates him from Kierkegaard or Garfinkel). Charmides experiences himself, not in the manner of self-exegesis, as a being whose nature becomes immediately visible, but on the contrary as one whose gifts have been bestowed by the enigmatic. Essentially, Charmides sees himself as a kind of savant, a chosen one: that is, a participant in enigma.

Nature comes to be seen by the natural as the source of unshakable conviction: "I am what I am through the friendly gift of nature". The natural sees himself as needing to welcome the "friendly gift" by "remaining" with himself, remaining as he is, friendly to nature. The natural suffers the unshakable conviction that the source of what he is, the source of what is good, is nature. He suffers this conviction because it is an immobile conviction rather than a strongly unshakable one.

To say Charmides' conviction is immobile rather than unshakable is to say that it instructs him to reject motion rather than integrate it. The fortunate endowment of nature bestowed upon Charmides is pre-

cisely his greatest temptation: it is the very thing that threatens to corrupt him most. Charmides experiences nature as immediately at one, perfectly integrated, without violence or ugliness - because these characteristics (in the human forms of grace and charm) are his nature. Charmides' gratitude to nature for its gifts convinces him that he ought to be like nature - or better, to remain like nature (since he begins with it). Indeed Charmides is tempted by the thought that there is virtue in being like nature. This is precisely his notion of what temperance consists of. For Charmides, temperance as gratitude to nature is virtuous. So at present he feels justified, although embarrassed, at finding difficulty in saying either whether he is temperate or what temperance is. He is embarrassed, but not ashamed of his difficulty, because he is aware of his difficulty (his embarrassment, his blush) as precisely another instance of "being natural", or in his eyes, being temperate. Charmides confuses natural (immediate) harmony for temperance. To be embarrassed is natural, for it is nature's response to being asked to articulate itself. Nature is always embarrassed at the idea of articulating itself, because articulation of the self threatens harmony and grace by differentiating the self in representation. The speaker who explicitly reveals himself by, for example, expressing his own opinions, is not being natural because he is opening up a gap between the immediate and the reflected (between the self and speech). To express an opinion, even more strongly to express a conviction, is no longer to be immersed in the natural, no longer to be merely graceful and charming. Part of Charmides' problem, of course, is that his example of articulation is provided by Critias - who is the antithesis of grace and charm: this seduces Charmides by default into his affirmation of nature. For Charmides, to be temperate is to be like nature: temperance is the acceptance of nature's beneficence. As we see, this acceptance is essentially passive.

Hence, after his initial natural and graceful reply, Charmides is persuaded to say what he thinks temperance is. His formulation is revealing: he says that temperance is,

"doing all things orderly and quietly, for example walking in the streets, and talking, and indeed doing everything in that way".  
(He continues by collecting:) "In a word, I should answer that, in my opinion, *sophrosyne* is a kind of quietness". (159b).

Charmides affirms the gentleness of a beneficent nature by calling the quiet charm through which he pays it homage temperance. Temperance is the same as natural harmony.

We said that temperance is the harmony between motion and unshakable conviction: that is, the speaker is temperate who makes his speech expressive of what he is deeply convinced of (expressive of his true need). Yet this expressiveness or harmony is not merely natural since natural motion is merely identical with what nature is. Nature does not itself generate its movements through a source or spirit, but merely repeats what it is through its motion. For example, the seasons are the cyclical movement of nature: the seasons are part of what nature is. It is only possible to think of 'seasons' as oriented in any way by positing an oriented being who stands behind them, i.e. God, who then by implication is taken to have planned them. It becomes necessary to think of God here because nature itself cannot assume the mantle, namely orientedness, for which we have decided we need a bearer. Again, in terms of the earlier part of this essay, anger as mere physiology belongs to the realm of nature. And as long as it does so, it remains unoriented: thus anger (as a human experience) is an example of man's need for a strong relation to nature. Anger showed us that man's relation to nature needs to be used rather than transcended as his very way of overcoming the risk of being consumed by sheer nature (sheer physiology).



Our work began with the risk of anger and sought to develop the end or value of that risk: at present we are encountering an alternative risk that seems very different but is only fortuitously so, namely the total absence or impossibility of anger. For this is the alternative represented by Charmides, the recipient of nature's gifts of all that is harmonious in nature. So his commitment to gentleness and charm, while seemingly different from the commitment to rage, is the same in that it is a commitment to what is given, to endowment, to physiology. Charmides tends to treat the stuff of which he is made (beauty, grace and harmony) as self-sufficient: he treats natural endowment as if it provided a worthy standard about which to be convinced. What he is saying in effect is that his natural harmony is already (without the need for work) temperate: hence he is passively rather than actively virtuous. In constructing a version of temperance that shows no need for inquiry, Charmides shows that really he means natural harmony: really he is seduced by his own endowment. Charmides' difficulties in answering Socrates' questions are the fruits of his tendency to avoid the "disturbances" or violence of conversation, dialogue and inquiry. We have sought to show that this tendency is both exemplified and fostered by Charmides' reticently-given formulations: not only by the manner in which they are given, but also by their content. Thus we find that Charmides has not justified temperance since he has not been able to say what it is. He has neglected the need to justify temperance's claim to worth by articulating in discourse its essential nature: i.e. by returning to temperance what it is entitled to, the praise of its worth. Charmides has been unjust to temperance: the temperance he has praised is but a pale version (i.e. natural harmony rather than genuine harmony) of what temperance truly is.



We are beginning to see that temperance's temptation to be unjust is rooted in its tendency to equate itself with natural harmony. Temperance as a "kind of quietness" is the mere appearance rather than the reality of temperance: through its "quietness" it seeks to preserve the beauty and charm of natural harmony. The seductiveness of natural harmony is that it appears to be temperate. Natural harmony is not the opposite of temperance (it is not intemperance): rather, it is the appearance of temperance without the reality.

But why does natural harmony not genuinely measure up to what it appears to be? It is certainly not indifferent to temperance (for it wants to be temperate, as we see with Charmides), nor, as we have also seen, is it the opposite of temperance (it is not opposed to the advent and development of temperance). What then prevents this development: why does the apparently temperate remain different from the truly temperate? Because it is indifferent to justice. Indeed, temperance itself, as we suggested, remains tempted by injustice in that it tends to emerge, initially, from a kind of injustice. The youth, for example, who has a "natural" temperance in him, will develop a certain composure and calmness of soul if he obeys its voice. Yet this will often involve a kind of self-indulgence. He will probably spend a great deal of time in his own company, in reverie, turning over his feelings and impressions and seeking insight from them. If justice, as we suggested in Chapter Three, requires a concern for what is best for everybody, then the "reveries of the solitary walker" to which an incipient temperance may lead, will be built upon a basis of injustice.

Mere harmony is not just harmony in that it precedes (or rather pre-empts) motion. Thus the natural harmony of Charmides is not a harmony of motion and the unshakable, the harmony of being moved by one's

genuine convictions: rather it is a harmony that is static, that protects its origin (the endowment). To say this differently: Charmides imagines that he is freed from the need to give an account of himself, to embody himself within his practices. As a result, he remains amorphous and opaque rather than vivid and substantial. Even to himself, the substance of what he is remains mystical and intangible. Beauty and charm themselves generate the awe and the mystique that surround them by evading the activity of developing and expressing the thoughts and passions they conceal. The seductiveness of beauty and charm, then, is that although they appear to be built on revelation, they actually tend to conceal more than they reveal. They reveal appearances but they conceal what is genuinely substantial, the passion of an interest. Above all, as we see so tellingly now with Charmides, natural harmony conceals the genuinely substantial from itself, and hence does not develop any weight. Natural harmony remains vague, opaque and weightless: herein is its indifference to justice. Justice enjoys the movement of self-development through self-expression because it can differentiate between sheer motion (empty words) and motion that is the expression of conviction. Self-expression is the motion of speech as the expression of conviction, and whenever self-expression shows itself between men, men are drawn together by developing their grasp of the convictions they need. This is a preliminary formulation of the spirited community, one we seek to develop and conclude as the substantial finale of our essay. Our problem, then, is: what is self-expression? Or, to put this differently, and in terms that anticipate the development of our discussion: what is it to name oneself expressively - and hence to be spirited?

## 2. Naming and community.

To name oneself expressively: to be spirited: to contribute to the life of the spirited community: we want to develop the resonances between all of these ideas. Critias and Charmides represent two extreme versions of naming the self. Charmides' hesitancy and reticence reflect the difficulty he experiences in trying to name himself. This difficulty is generated by his adherence to the harmony of nature in its quiescence: for the one thing that nature does not do is reflect upon or name itself. To the natural, who lives in an immediate, unreflective, unity with himself, the notion of objectifying oneself, or even the virtues that one participates in, is a strange one. For this notion is contrary to nature: for the natural, it captures all this is unnatural or anti-natural in the majority of men. The natural remains vague and ethereal because he refuses to name himself. Thus for the natural, speech is not a medium of reflection, but merely another part of nature. The natural rejects the vigorous and active dimension of speech in favour of a version of speech as a recapitulation of nature. If speech is part of nature, then the one who is natural (who belongs within nature) is immune from objectification. Now we are in a position to understand Charmides' reluctance (to name himself) as a kind of resistance: a resistance to the "unnatural", or the activity of naming in a self-reflective way. The natural tends to use speech to endow names, in the manner of Adam, rather than to reflect: that is, develop and express the name. The natural, as the "first man", the man who lives immersed in nature, resists the temptation to interfere with nature, by treating the names he gives to things as endowments, that is, as further instances of nature. We think here of Rousseau<sup>2</sup>. And for Cratylus, in Plato's dialogue, if the word used of

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2. See Rousseau, *Essay on the Origin of Languages*, 1966.

something is not its natural name, then it is not a name at all<sup>3</sup>. Charmides would not only agree with this but would go further in intuitively (naturally) attributing to himself the knowledge of natural names. For Charmides, the word "temperance" names what temperance is, because it is the word that suggests to him an intuition of what he is. By nature, Charmides is a phenomenologist, versed in the art of pre-reflectively intuiting (i.e. knowing by nature) what he is. Knowledge and reality coincide - immediately in natural harmony. Words are thus made to serve the function of calling forth inner intuitions that the subject (and only the subject) knows are adequate to what the words reference. Naming, then, is the external stimulus for the activity of intuitively knowing oneself (being "temperate"), but in itself has no deeper significance. Naming does not express, but rather intones the truth for the knowing subject. Notice, then, Charmides' response when Socrates, having suggested that if temperance abides in him, he must have "some intimation of her nature and qualities", goes on to recommend: "You know your native language, and therefore you must be able also to express your opinion" (159a). Charmides can agree without reservation that he must have "some intimation" of temperance because it concurs with his notion of intuitive (natural) self-understanding. But his response to Socrates' suggestion that he will be able to give expression to this intimation is a reluctant one which shows us the trouble it gives him. "Perhaps", he unenthusiastically replies, and so reveals his doubt that his competence in Greek makes available any resources for developing the "natural" name. To put this more strongly: what Charmides doubts is the need for this development.

Why does Charmides secretly want to resist Socrates at this point? Because Socrates is suggesting that speech does not belong to the realm

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3. See Plato, Cratylus, 431e-432d

of nature (as Charmides wants it to) but instead enables the speaker, through his knowledge of his native language, to express and develop his opinion. The knowledge that is native, or natural, or familiar, while it is a valuable beginning or basis for work, enables work to be done, rather than re-capitulating that work, as Charmides would have it. Knowing one's native language, far from providing genuine knowledge on its own account, by intimating to us the natural names of things, is in need of development - a development that begins through "expressing your opinion ". Here the unreflective character of Charmides' naturalism shows itself: Charmides' attitude to language is intuitionist and solipsistic rather than conversational or developmental. Like some poets, Charmides treats the words of speech as encapsulating within themselves the essences of the things they name - e.g. "temperance". He treats naming as encapsulating or endowing, in a one-to-one transfer from speech to object, rather than expressing or developing, in a one-to-many-to-one-again movement from the idea to speech. The idea is implicitly one, but it is grasped not through the inner activity of intuition (for this is indifferent to justice) but rather through the dialogue with the manyness of opinion. It is this motion that Charmides resists.

Immediate self-evident intuition is indifferent to justice because it is predicated on its own invisibility. We can develop our grasp of this connection by attending to the famous story of Gyges as it is recounted by Glaucon in The Republic. Gyges finds a golden ring which he subsequently discovers has the power to make him invisible. The ability to act while remaining invisible gives Gyges the power to follow his impulses and pursue his personal gain. Gyges succumbs to the temptation of the ring, the temptation of injustice and tyranny:

"After this discovery (of the ring's powers) he contrived to be one of the messengers sent to the court. There he seduced the queen and with her help murdered the king and seized the throne".  
(Republic, 360a-b)

Gyges becomes a tyrant because, being unable to resist tyranny's temptations, the resources of invisibility offer him the means to enact them. Aristotle shows us the significance of the tyrant's invisibility in his description of the methods by which a tyrant maintains power. First he ensures that the people of the city are visible to him (through the use of spies and the forbidding of secrecy among his subjects): secondly he makes himself invisible to the people by acting the part of an honest ruler. For the tyrant, Aristotle remarks, "it is necessary to appear to the subjects to be not a tyrannical ruler but a steward and royal governor".<sup>4</sup>

Charmides' hiddenness tends towards the tyrannic because it is founded on his imagined and untested virtue. Charmides, although he will not say that he is temperate, sees nothing wrong with imagining to himself that he is temperate. Indeed, Charmides imagines that the temperate man is the man who does not flaunt himself (the man who resists saying that he is temperate) and hence Charmides takes his obscurity as actual evidence of his temperance. Withdrawal from con-

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4. Aristotle, Politics, 1314 b 42. Quoted in M.Shell (1978) whose account of the Gyges story first suggested to me the connection between visibility and justice. Injustice wants to promote a kind of blindness, so injustice tends to cohabit with obscurity, mystique, and reticence. Of course, Charmides as yet (as mere reticence) lacks the activism necessary for the birth of the tyrant: but Critias, his guardian, does not. Critias and Charmides are a dangerous combination, the combination of justice segregated from temperance and temperance segregated from justice. They show us that here, at least, the marriage of two excesses produces an excess (tyranny) that is worse than either. My conclusion is an attempt to show justice and temperance belonging together in a stronger way than the mere marriage-contract of two sundered (and essentially unvirtuous) opposites. They must belong together by belonging within what is greater: spirit or the Good as for-itself.



versation in the form of resistance to self-expression provides Charmides with occasion for self-congratulation. Charmides thinks that the obscurity of his own nature (that which he intuits rather than expresses) entitles him to the idea of his own excellence. The way to maintain the excellence "already in" one's soul is to protect it modestly - and hence to resist embodying in one's speech the desire for what truly animates it. Charmides is blind (and his invisibility renders others blind) to the need for his speech to test and extend him. This is the implicit (and still undeveloped) arrogance of his equation of temperance with natural harmony. Here is Charmides' proneness to the temptation of Gyges. Charmides does not exemplify, like Critias, the abstraction and emptiness of sheer intelligence, but rather the vagueness and opaqueness of sheer naturalism.

Natural harmony construes virtue as inaction. That inactivity could foster and breed tyrannic tendencies seems at first to be a strange idea. Yet, in that, as we have seen, the tyrant's actions are designed to conceal rather than reveal what he is, inactivity - even the inactivity of natural beauty - in its character as concealment, turns out to have a surprising kinship with him. Inactivity is attracted to tyrannic types of action because they provide what inactivity is looking for: a type of life that will allow it to protect what it is by nature. Our usage here of "tyrannic actions" is not simply restricted to the actions of those who happen to be tyrants: for us, those actions and speeches that disguise rather than reveal the speaker are prone to the temptations of tyranny. Quietness and modesty, the passive virtues of Charmides, in that they conceal the speaker, are prone to the same temptations: and this is their kinship with the activism of self-definition and sheer intelligence.



Natural harmony turns out to be akin to disguise because it cannot imagine the strong sense of re-presentation. The activity of re-presenting the self requires the irony of the speaker: naturalism however, weakens speech into a supposedly literal rendition of its object. For naturalism, speech is supposed to attach the natural name to the object: speech endows what belongs to the object by nature and thus repeats the endowment of nature. Concretely, then, naturalism speaks: to say it weakens speech does not mean that it rejects speech altogether, for it does not lapse into sheer silence. Yet its notion of speech as literal naming generates brevity and terseness as its speaking practices. In a way, naturalism is always threatening silence in the sense that it will become silent whenever others become "too garrulous", "too insistent", "too opinionated", or in any other way other than natural. The natural often feels overwhelmed by hubris: even his own hubris overwhelms him and puts him into selfless ecstasy (or perhaps plain drunkenness).

The ironist is free of the oppressive headache of hubris' threat, since he is not imprisoned by a literal notion of speech: yet his speech re-presents rather than disguises or obscures its topic. We will seek to develop this by examining Charmides' problem as the problem of names, and in particular as the problem of the speaker's relation to his own name. First of all, we need to realize that a name is more than simply the label that convention attaches to a particular object or person. Deeply, that is, one's name is more than merely one's proper name, John, Peter, and so on. Yet these proper names are not insignificant: they are not mere empty conventions pinned on to objects as indifferently as numbers on babies in a maternity ward. For a start, we know these names have their lives within particular traditions,

religious, national and so on. And the act of giving a child a name has always been associated with ritual celebration, for it is also the act of initiating a new member into the community. This celebratory act does not intend to treat the child as a passive recipient of a label, but on the contrary ritually expresses the community's demand that the child will orient to being a good member. Celebration expresses the community's notion that this is a good demand. Hence (because the named one is not merely a passive recipient) arises the possibility of being re-named, either by entering a new community (e.g. the religious convert or the new initiate of a religious or political group) or by achieving some recognized eminence within one (e.g. the special "heroic" name or nickname for which fighting groups of all kinds are especially well-known).

Much of the significance of the stories of the Old Testament is woven in and around the names of their participants: for these names are not at all arbitrary, but actually contribute much of the meaning of the stories in which they are embedded. Moderns like to imagine they have freed themselves of this tyranny of names, but now we can remind ourselves that names direct us to what we need: a strong relation to community and tradition. We will resist the modern temptation to dismiss names by treating them as a matter of indifference, as merely conventional labels that serve only to distinguish items from each other and classify species and genera. Instead, we are asking, what is the ideal speaker's relationship to his name? His name, as we have said, is more than merely his proper name, although the latter can remind him of his name. Now we can say that one's name is one's inheritance, it is everything that places a particular person in a community, as an actor within it. A name specifies or

particularizes an actor within a community, yet it does not segregate the actor from the community - even when it names him as "strange", for even here the estrangement remains particular to the community as well as to the individual bearer. What is central with names is that they particularize and identify the community as well as the individual - which is what makes it possible for many individuals to bear the same name, and for the same name to get passed on from generation to generation<sup>5</sup>. The community regenerates its need for this particular name, and thus renews itself as this particular community. So there is a strong sense of endowment or inheritance that goes hand in hand with the idea of the name. A name is an endowment: it is the speaker's beginning or origin that is never an absolute or universal origin. It is bequeathed upon the speaker, like the discussion of justice in *The Republic*, rather than merely willed by the speaker. The speaker does not decide his own name (as an imputed ideal beginning) but rather needs to resolve his relation to his name.

Thus Charmides' name is "temperance": for this is the name that ~~he has~~ been bequeathed with. It is Charmides' endowment. So when Socrates asks him whether he truly possesses this quality of temperance, he is not so much asking "Do you live up to your name?" as inviting Charmides to reveal his relation to his own name. A speaker lives his name by developing his enjoyment of his name - rather than seeing "living up to" either as an onerous task, or as an effortless fulfillment. The first of these extremes sees the name as entirely external

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5. Thomas Mann, in his retelling of the Biblical story in his Joseph and his Brothers (1978), writes in the notion that over countless generations, there were in fact many Abrahams, Isaacs, and Jacobs. This suggests to us that a "generation" is the agency that re-generates the community's names.

to oneself, or as something that one merely successfully attaches to oneself. It is the name of reputation, "making a name for oneself", in the manner of Critias. Critias manipulates his name in order to manipulate the community: his intemperance is his desire to define his own name in order to define his relationship (of tyranny) to the community. The one who imagines he can completely define the community and his relation to it through his name (viz. for Critias, "the intelligent one"), is the tyrant. On the other hand, the second of the two extremes sees the name as entirely internal to oneself, as something that is automatically identical to oneself. This is the refusal to orient to the community's interest in the name - it treats the name as if it could be something completely private. And because, as we have seen, names are deeply communal as well as individual in their interest, the merely private name never really becomes a name at all. Charmides, because of the privacy of his "name", suffers the pain of not really having a name, of not really being recognizable in the community, and of not being able to recognize himself for others. Hence, whereas Critias has tendencies towards tyranny because of his deliberations, Charmides is the "accidental" tyrant par excellence. The very immunity of Charmides' name from the community, or better, from the community-rooted opportunity for conversation, tends to awe the community and render the name even more private. And again, the figure who derives a kind of after-the-event validation for his name through the awe it generates - i.e. through its intense privacy - is the tyrant. Awe encourages the tyrant to segregate his name from the community and to place his name before the community rather than within it. The tyrant places himself before the assembly, metaphorically as well as concretely, as the privately appropriated image of the ideal. The tyrant traps his name within the realm of privacy: that is, he segregates his name from conversation.

Charmides traps and is trapped by his name, "temperance". His name is imprisoned within himself and is prevented from participating in the enjoyment of conversation. This means that Charmides himself does not enjoy conversation. The extent of his participation in conversation is limited by the overriding need to protect the privacy of his name. Charmides relates to his name in this way because of the content of that name, a content which equates temperance with natural harmony. Charmides has accepted the name "temperance", or more fully, "temperance understood as natural harmony". This is not an enjoyable name because of its immobility: it inhibits rather than develops conversation. It fosters a notion of an already appropriated inheritance that is consequently in need of protection. Charmides construes his name as something he must possess rather than something he must use (and so truly own, i.e. make his own) and so he treats any motion as a threat.

Socrates is famous, renowned, notorious, and infamous, for what he does. He is all of these things because different interlocutors are responding to Socrates' conversation and the reports they hear of it. Yet whichever kind of interlocutor he is conversing with, Socrates wants to do what is necessary. What is necessary for him is to express his name in a way that takes account of his interlocutor i.e. in a way that does not merely protect it from his interlocutor. Socrates is spirited rather than patriotic (or, of course, indifferent) towards his name. The one who is protective towards his name can only enjoy being what he is among others who are like himself - and even then, he is often preoccupied with "the others", who only happen to be absent. In the presence of "the others", he protects his name through withdrawal, aloofness, or aggressive insult. He does these things in order to "protect his integrity".

Protecting the integrity of one's name is a temptation that we cannot merely dismiss as if only others suffered it: rather, it is a temptation intrinsic to the activity of inquiry. This is because a concern for integrity is not a misguided concern, but rather a concern that needs to be understood. Integrity resonates with wholeness and unity: a sense of integrity is a sense of the worthiness of what is whole or one. And since temperance is the harmony - achieved rather than natural - of the parts of the soul, temperance can only be developed through a sense of the worth of this unity. Temperance needs a sense of integrity. Yet the temptation of integrity is that it might seem to need protecting: it might seem fragile rather than robust, precious rather than valuable.

Socrates' temperance is his knowledge that although he is not wholly integrated into a unity, yet he needs to involve the whole of himself in his speeches and actions. Integrity in the strong sense is robust because it involves the speaker heart and soul in what he does: and it is valuable because it enables that speaker to develop temperance (the realization that, although wholly involved, he is a part). Now we can grasp that integrity does not protect the speaker, but develops him: it does not detach him, but involves him. Integrity is not something a speaker has, for the protection of which he detaches himself: it is something he wants, for the development of which he involves (all of) himself.

Socrates shows his (desire for) integrity by involving the whole of himself in conversation. He does not merely protect his name, but rather enjoys it ironically. We can see this tellingly at the beginning of the conversation with Critias and Charmides. As we saw earlier, Critias suddenly re-names Socrates as a doctor. "Call Charmides", he says, "and



tell him that I want him to come and see a physician about the illness of which he spoke to me the day before yesterday". Having sent for Charmides, he turns to Socrates and says:

"(Charmides) has been complaining lately of having a headache when he rises in the morning: now why should you not make him believe that you know a cure for the headache?" (155b)

Socrates resists the temptation to protect his name (as a philosopher) by merely repudiating the new name that Critias bequeathes upon him. He does not merely discriminate between the philosopher and the doctor by making a comparison unfavourable to the latter. Instead he accepts the name of doctor since this acceptance will provide one more occasion for the ironic use of his name. Socrates uses his name ironically in order to activate inquiry. That is, Socrates uses his name - since he involves all of himself in his conversation - and this use is also a development of his name. In this instance, Socrates develops the resonance between philosophy and medicine, and so develops the notion of what philosophy is. Socrates must show Charmides that philosophy is like medicine in that it heals the soul through the "charm of fair words". Yet he must also show that philosophy differs from medicine in that its practice is good for its own sake and not merely for its consequences. Although philosophy has good consequences - e.g. the "charm of fair words" will cure Charmides' headache, which is really a disorder of his spirit - we desire to engage in philosophy for its own sake. We seek temperance not in order merely to ward off the sufferings of intemperance but because we love temperance for its own sake. Truly temperate actions are those that have laid the ghosts that have haunted the actor. They are motivated by the actor's spirit rather than as mere therapies to the unrest and disquiet of intemperance. Socrates' refusal to dictate the charm to



Charmides is designed to remember the difference between true temperance and therapy.

Although philosophy is therapeutic, truly spirited philosophy is not motivated by the search for therapy. As Socrates might put it to Charmides: The charm of fair words will cure your headache, but that is not their real point. This shows us the risk of the "doctor" analogy for Socrates. Since Charmides is suffering spiritually, he needs a "charm" of some kind: hence the analogy should not be merely rejected. Yet since true spirit loves what it enacts, it would do injustice to philosophy to limit it merely to therapy. It would be unjust because it would forget philosophy's spirit. So the spirited philosopher is one who is prepared to take his good health for granted, to take it as given. He neither congratulates himself for it (for then he becomes an athlete) nor does he continually or on principle doubt it (for then he becomes a patient). The spirited philosopher takes for granted that conditions, while they may have caused and continue to cause pain, have not damaged his health. Here again is the sturdiness of temperance: the robustness of spirit is its capacity to sustain and renew itself in the midst of pain and suffering. Spirit distinguishes between the pain engendered by conditions (i.e. what is merely irritating) and the suffering that is made possible because what we love must be embodied in conditions and practices. Spirit knows that it must suffer the loss of conditions and practices it loves. Spirit mourns every loss but regrets nothing: this is the robustness and health of spirit.

It would be very wrong, then, to say that Charmides suffers from a sickness of spirit that needs to be "put straight". Instead, his spirit is undeveloped, or rather, spirit has not (yet) expressed itself

through Charmides. So Socrates the charmer is on one level a therapist who cures the headache: but on a deeper level he is a snake-charmer who entices Charmides' spirit to express itself. The image of the snake-charmer reminds us of one of the essential features of charm: it brings out the best in people. (It even brings out the best of the potentially poisonous snake: its ability to dance!) Putting charm into things is a way of reminding others that the best life is the life that is enjoyed. The philosopher will be charming not in order to conduct therapy but to bring out the spiritedness (the enjoyable nature) of the life of reflection.

The speaker who seeks to protect his name is incapable of charm. Strangely enough Charmides does not know what genuine charm is since he equates the "charm" that Socrates reputedly knows with therapy. Therapy (or medicine) will simply restore Charmides to his natural state - by curing his headache. So Charmides is showing his protective attitude towards his name when he requests of Socrates: "Then I will write out the charm from your dictation". (156a). Because Charmides treats his name as natural (endowed by nature), he seeks to protect its integrity by passively accepting those speeches that will restore it. Charmides "writes from dictation" because he is a restorer. That speech is good in the eyes of Charmides which restores the endowments of nature. For Charmides the ideal speaker is the doctor or therapist: the one who would respond to his request by dictating the truth to him. Instead of doing this, Socrates charms Charmides by joking: "With my consent or without my consent?" (156a). Socrates makes Charmides laugh.

Charmides' desperate desire for a cure is making him passive: he wants the very minimum of activity, the mere dictation of the charm, in order to cure or restore himself. Instead, Socrates enlivens Char-

mides: he brings Charmides' spirit to greater life. Socrates is trying to show Charmides that he needs to live spiritedly rather than seek therapy. Dormant within Charmides is the desire for spiritedness. In enlivening Charmides, Socrates discovers something very important: making others more spirited is good for one's own spirits. Unlike nursing or doctoring, it is not a mere drain of resources, an exhausting demand that would tax a saint. In making him laugh, Socrates makes Charmides actually notice for the first time who he is actually talking to. Laughingly, Charmides says, "with your consent", and addresses Socrates by name. Now we are beginning to see that it is spirit that qualifies a speaker for conversation: spirit makes us genuinely interested in conversation by making us interested in our interlocutor's name. Charmides' laugh and his calling Socrates by his name both display the same thing: the stirring of his spirit.

Spirit makes us genuinely interested in conversation because spirit moves us. Spirit is the mobile energy of development: it is the opposite of the monolithic or the sluggish. Mohammed Ali reminds us of the spirit it takes to transform mere weight into full powers. Ali could outfight his opponents not because he was heavier, or even stronger, but because his movements were faster and perfectly integrated with his weight and strength. What is required is (the development of) the power to move the weight one bears. Otherwise - if one's weight (of opinion, or of endowment) exceeds the mobility of one's spirit - one becomes ponderous (as Critias does) or languid (as Charmides does). Spirit moves us to listen and to speak, to "enter the spirit of the conversation" by being willing to develop it in our own particular way. The spirited conversationalist neither dictates nor is dictated to, neither names nor is named by, the conversation, but rather brings his name and the conversation to bear on each other. True spirit brings

inheritance (the endowments of nature and place) into the motion of speech: this is spirit's dialectic. This bringing to bear is what we have been calling charm: now, since it has emerged as the charm of dialectic<sup>6</sup>, we will call it by its strongest name - irony.

The charm of the ironist does not mean he is merely interactional, responding to others but not expressing an interest. Instead, talking to Charmides (or Meno, or Alcibiades) is one more way for Socrates to express his interest in what is good for its own sake. As we have said, temperance and justice are good for their own sakes, yet the relationship between them is not "naturally harmonious" - even though the notion of temperance seems to suggest, perhaps, that it should be. The harmony needs work: hence the problem of re-achieving it is not one-sidedly a consequence of human frailty and weakness (though this is part of it) but is also written into the nature of temperance itself and the nature of justice itself. This is the spirited philosopher's interest: not to restrict himself to therapy (the human weakness side of the problem) but rather to bring

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6. Socrates remarks to Charmides that the cure of the soul.... "has to be effected by the use of certain charms, and these charms are fair words" (157a). Socrates has just said that "all good and evil, whether in the body or in the whole man, originates.... in the soul" (156e): hence the need to attend to the soul. The ideal speaker knows that the relationship between good and evil ought not, and need not, be worried about: it ought not be a preoccupation that consumes him. Worry would be called for if the good could not be pursued for its own sake (because we love it) but only for negative reasons, to ward off evil, to merely combat degeneration, and so on. See above, Chapter 2. This marks the difference between therapy and philosophy: whereas therapy is driven by its struggle with the evils that afflict bodies and minds, philosophy is moved by the pursuit of what is good for its own sake that animates spirit.

out the strongest possible version of the difficulty at hand. The strong difficulty is akin to the difficulty of the guardians in The Republic: how to be both fierce (to strangers) and friendly (to citizens) at once? For this, more than therapy is required, but instead, the right kind of education. Only spirited philosophy can show us what the guardians need.

Now at last the philosopher's problem is revealing itself to us. The philosopher's problem is the self-same problem as Critias' and Charmides' problem: the need to achieve a strong (non-natural) harmony of temperance and justice in the soul. This is why Socrates and Critias and Charmides participate together in conversation: Socrates wants to teach the others, not in the sense of lecturing to them, or of imparting his knowledge to them, but of inviting them to truly realize that they share "his" problem. For this is what neither of them realize at present. To put this another way: Socrates will resist merely doing therapy on Critias and Charmides (by resolving their problems for them) but instead will turn the souls of each of them towards an encounter with the problem that gives rise to their "personal" problems: the problem of justice and temperance. We saw in the previous chapter how Socrates resists creating false empathy with Charmides ("let Charmides talk for a change"). Now we see the deep reason why he will also resist agreeing with Critias' definitions, even though they sound Socratic. It is to bring out the strong problem, the problem that always goes beyond the personality of the speaker, although it surfaces in conversation in these particular ways. Socrates resists agreeing with Critias in order to recover the depth of the problem concealed by Critias' desire for agreement.

### 3. Spirit and integration.

In The Charmides, Socrates is tempted by each of his interlocutors in turn. Critias is probably the only speaker in Plato who utters Socratic-sounding formulations and yet is vigorously refuted by Socrates himself.<sup>7</sup> Socrates resists agreeing with utterances that sound friendly. Critias, in fact, is very keen for Socrates to agree with him: indeed every new formulation he comes up with seems almost designed especially to elicit Socrates' agreement. Yet Socrates resists. For example, he asks Critias if the latter means to say that "he who does good is temperate". When Critias replies "yes, and you, friend, would agree" Socrates retorts:

"No matter whether I should or not; just now, not what I think, but what you are saying, is the point at issue". (163e).

Initially, Socrates seems quarrelsome here: why make such a laboured point of withholding agreement when surely Critias is justified in thinking that Socrates would, if truth were known, agree?

Socrates resists for the very reason that Critias is eternally justifying himself. Critias needs to learn that far from needing more justification, more intelligence, and more rigour, he needs something greater. Critias must learn to ask: what does justice need in order to be perfect? Perfect justice is not the same as eternal justifica-

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7. We have seen (at page 135 above) that Socrates risks indulging Critias by conceding arguments concerning possibility for the sake of the discussion. But this is never allowed to compromise his need to refute Critias (even though Critias sounds Socratic). When Socrates concedes possibility to Critias, he tells him openly that it is merely a concession - in order ultimately, as we have seen, to elicit what is Desirable. Anyhow, if we give a little more consideration to Socrates' refutation, we soon realize that it too risks indulgence in this instance. In this discussion, however, our attention is centred not on indulgence (which as we have seen is temperance's risk) but on that which is higher than refutation, that end to which refutation is aimed - justice.



tion but rather justice that is in perfect harmony with temperance. Strong or perfect justice needs to give to temperance its inspiration and to take from temperance its sense of the unshakable. This is the strong problem that is the real ground of Critias' "personal" problem. Critias is not merely an idiosyncrasy. Critias dramatizes in a "personal" way one particular failure that is always likely to occur whenever communities seek to regulate themselves: hence Critias' excess is perennial. It is the excess of justice without limit, or more specifically, justice uninfluenced by the depth and reserve of temperance. Justice uninfluenced is unable to do its business, which is to inspire *sophrosyne* (tempted by nature) out of its slumber: instead it produces mimics, repeaters of its dictates. Socrates might have given his agreement, and then tested Critias' understanding of what is agreed upon: this is the practice he often follows elsewhere. Here this would indulge Critias: it would invite him to display his expertise in justifying himself. Instead, Socrates wants to teach Critias by turning him towards what truly limits him: the deep and the valuable.

Critias is not merely an idiosyncrasy because he depicts what unlimited justice looks like in practice. Justice uninfluenced by the concern for worth tends to forget the need for the suggestiveness of speech. In fact, because justice wants to be firm, it is tempted to become fastidious: because it wants to be definite, it is tempted to become definitive. Justice's very desire to regulate the community, to avoid being nebulous or impressionistic, might lead it to neglect the concern for worth. The crucial problem is that once justice starts becoming definitive at the expense of depth, it tends to imagine that the remaining ambiguities require it to persist in the same direction. As we have seen, the final, and (in an unusually significant sense)



"logical" outcome of this process is the legal or governmental document, designed and written in order to achieve complete intelligibility and absence of ambiguity.

We have already examined Critias as a definer. Defining sets Critias' intelligence in motion. Now we can see that defining is one relationship to names. To be a definer is to imagine names as subject to the will. For example, Critias can will (define) the distinction between making and doing. Critias' relation to his own name conforms to the same pattern. As Socrates remarks, Critias became embarrassed because "he had a reputation to maintain" (169c): and earlier we saw that Socrates' praise of Charmides as being of the same house (name) as Critias elicited from the latter one of his greatest boasts. Critias wants to make a name for himself.

The definer is one who believes in the sovereignty of the will. We saw in Chapter Three that Critias turns Desire into volition or wish. Now we can develop this idea by saying: defining is the activity that brings about this transformation. To exert one's will now means: to define. Critias exerts his will by defining himself (i.e. making a name for himself). His notion of what he is hinges around his capacity to define, comprehensively and unambiguously, the subject at hand. Critias imagines that intelligence developed without limit generates sophrosyne. For there is no limit to what the will can subject. Intemperance for Critias would mean lack of control or weakness of will. This can be overcome by subjecting to the will the will itself. Temperance, in the eyes of sheer intelligence, is the will willing itself, the definition that defines itself. The paradigm of the definition is the "knowledge that knows itself" - or as Critias himself puts it: "Wisdom alone is the science of other sciences and of

itself" (166c, my emphasis). Again, at this point, Critias accuses Socrates of refuting the argument even though he really "agrees". And again, Socrates resists his invitation, although it seems he could hear Critias as saying something like: wisdom counsels itself wisely because it knows itself. We find Socrates saying something like this himself in The Republic (428b). Why, then, does Socrates resist? Why in fact, is it necessary for him to do so?

Whereas Charmides' temperance is its appearance rather than its reality, Critias' version is its abstraction rather than its realization. Critias wants the virtues to be definite: in a word he wants the virtuous man to be identifiable. At its deepest level, this desire is the desire for justice. In order to do justice to ourselves and each other in our speeches and actions, we need to develop and express the notions through which to identify ourselves. Yet justice without limit (without the sense of depth or worth) becomes rationalistic and definitive.

Socrates wants to teach Critias the spirit of temperance. Genuine temperance is animated by spirit because it remembers that what it sees is other than itself. Just as sight sees what is other than itself, knowledge knows what is other than itself. Yet, knowledge grasps what is other than itself by befriending it. (This movement beyond the mere reminder of Otherness, we saw earlier, in our opening chapters, is the movement of justice.) The spirited guard dog, Socrates jokes in The Republic, is philosophical because it is friendly towards what is known (376a-b). The risk for the temperate or philosophical nature, the one who grasps the otherness of what is known, is the loss of spirit. THIS IS NONE OTHER THAN THE RISK THAT HAS BEEN ALWAYS AT THE HEART OF OUR DISSERTATION: THE RISK OF NEGATIVITY. Loss of spirit

is the rule of negativity: and the philosopher's irony becomes negative when the embryonic temperance with which he begins is not developed.

We can think here of the example of friendship itself. Although the practice of friendship is grounded in the nature of friendship itself (which is beyond particular examples of friendship), we truly grasp it only by enacting it in practice. To know friendship requires the befriending of it by allowing oneself and another to become friends. Friendship is really the best teacher of justice. It gives us the knowledge required to become just. Friendship teaches us that even if we lost all our friends at sea we would not lose friendship. Our depth of suffering would express our grasp of friendship: it would be spirited, not tragic. Spirit mourns every loss but regrets nothing. Spirit delights in everything it comes to know because it comes to know by (re)-discovering friendship. The merely temperate philosopher is tempted, because re-discovery is involved, not to bother! He is tempted to slumber because he says to himself, "I know this already". And the Critiases he meets, who always will the truths they "know", he allows to pain him and tempt him to slumber all the more, waking up occasionally to rail against them, then falling asleep exhausted once more. Now friendship is teaching us that re-discovery is always particular and embodied: it is always discovery. The freshness is not a fiction or illusion, as negativity would have it, but is a strong requirement. It is necessary so as to truly befriend and truly know anything: to grasp it from within.

Spirit is perfect because it is perfectly just towards particularity. It is perfectly just towards particularity because it grasps how particularity is a strong requirement.

Particularity is stronger than circumstance because it depends for its very genesis on the activity of spirit. Spirit is free of the dilemma of aloofness versus subjection to circumstance: its activism engages the circumstantial, but is always more than circumstantial.

Spirit, then, is not negative towards particularity as Charmides is. Spirit does not treat what it knows as merely natural, as an endowment, with which it is familiar from the beginning, and hence, as not requiring particularization. The spirited speaker befriends rather than familiarizes. Hence he has no reason to protect himself, as Charmides does, from a strange or "unnatural" world: a world outside the family of his own natural gifts and graces. The spirited speaker does not merely stay with the place he began in, and repudiate all that does not belong to it: he is not parochial. Instead he seeks to grasp the depth or the spirit of what is truly particular to his place. He is more truly at home in his place than the parochial type, because he is interested in doing justice to his place rather than protecting it. Doing justice involves giving an account of it that brings out the best of its particularity. Spirit is perfectly just towards particularity. Spirit is genuinely rather than abstractly just.

Nor is spirit merely intelligent and definitive towards particularity, as Critias is. Spirit does not treat what it knows as merely conventional (i.e. as subject to instrumentalism). Spirit knows itself to be deeper than the convention, although it requires various conventions in order to express itself. Spirit's depth, its interest in what is good for its own sake, tempers its justice so that the latter does not get reduced to a utilitarian "convention" or a mere

code of ethics. Justice is more than a method - for method without depth is intemperate towards particularity by reducing it to controllable circumstance. The exegetic legal document is intemperate towards the depth of speech by seeking to reduce it to troublesome (but controllable i.e. circumstantial) ambiguity. The spirited speaker needs the temperance of developing his true place rather than simply moving around in an opportune way and using the endless distinctions that are always available. He is not cosmopolitan. Instead he seeks to remain temperate no matter where he goes: the real motion he seeks to generate is that of deepening the conversation by expressing its spirit. He moves more genuinely than the cosmopolitan type, because his motion is temperate (oriented to depth) rather than opportune or definitive. Being temperate requires re-calling deep needs in the midst of the motion of conversation. Spirit is temperate in that its justice is oriented to depth. Spirit is genuinely rather than apparently temperate.

Socrates has been tempted, first to treat temperance as something natural (that is, to forget justice) and then to treat justice as a matter for formal and all-embracing definition (that is, to forget temperance). As we have seen, unlimited temperance and unlimited justice, when simply present together, tend to bring out the worst in each other. Charmides' naturalism invites him to become a passive recipient, and Critias' definitiveness invites him to dictate. Critias tends to take the credit for what he thinks he has made of Charmides, and Charmides tends to imagine that both Critias and himself know a great deal more than they do. Charmides, in other words, naively attributes to Critias the power to name according to nature, while Critias foolishly attributes to Charmides the property

of being constituted by the name he gives him. Charmides makes Critias think tyranny is possible, and Critias makes Charmides think it is desirable. That is, Charmides suggests to Critias the possibility of constituting reality by naming (defining), whereas Critias enables Charmides to hide in the abstractness and vagueness of the "natural" name. Critias, Socrates says, speaks about temperance in riddles. Critias is the classic manipulator of riddles: he is the corrupt oracle who abuses the naivete of others. Charmides is the serious oracle who hides himself in the vague and hence invites the foolishness of others who risk their necks by making themselves visible. Charmides (vaguely) thinks he can save himself by making Critias his ally: his own naivete (or "receptiveness") will not only be protected but, will even be confirmed and encouraged. Critias (instrumentally) thinks he can further himself by making Charmides his ally: for Charmides will expose the foolishness of others. Critias will be helped by this exposure to define others<sup>8</sup>.

#### 4. Justice: irony and the name.

Socrates resists the restriction of the literal version of medicine by being playful with the metaphor it offers him. His play invites us to reflect on the nature of therapy and philosophy. Yet spirit is stronger either than resistance (Charmides) or formal invitation (Critias): it is inspirational. Spirit "rubs off". The story of the holy Spirit descending on the Apostles in tongues of flame is a metaphor for the notion of spirit breathing life into those it touches. Spirit is needed to influence others. Now we need to ask: far from merely resisting Critias and formally inviting Charmides how does

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8. This is precisely the use he tries to make of Charmides to expose Socrates and define him (as physician).

Socrates begin to influence them? How would Socrates' influence have turned Charmides and Critias away from tyranny towards ideal speech?

Socrates influences by showing that spirit rather than definition or vagueness resolves the problem of necessity.

Charmides is vague because he mistakes natural harmony for temperance. The natural has a sense of what is necessary but it is an inner apprehension rather than a speech. What is necessary is what is ordained, or better, bequeathed, by nature. Since the natural feels that he himself is "close to nature", he also feels, as a result, that he has a grasp of what is necessary to him. Seemingly without effort, he lives in tune with his own centre. This is how the natural can appear to be so temperate: hence the estimate of Charmides' friends is not an obviously unwarranted one. Yet natural harmony speaks vaguely - because nature gives its endowment before speech and therefore strongly antecedent to it. For the natural, speech does not make a strong difference.<sup>9</sup> Hence the hardest thing of all for the natural is to identify himself, to show himself to others and to himself. He is in-himself but not for-himself. The difficulty is that because, as a prepossessed and already integrated subject, he imagines himself to be so close to nature as to be identical with it, he cannot distinguish or differentiate a topic of conversation out of the already seamless whole. Since he "is" this natural whole, to distinguish something within it would require the violation of nature: the natural would become foolish by losing his composure. For the natural, the fool is the one who displays the hubris of discoursing about a part within the whole, a "concern". The natural sees particularization as the foolish concern of hubris, man's loss of touch with

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9. Recall our analysis of awe in the previous chapter.



nature. What Charmides needs to learn is the strong necessity of temperance, as the necessity of risking foolishness.

What is folly? It is part of the endowment of nature and upbringing. Spirit's relationship towards folly is part of its irony towards endowment. The risk of nature and upbringing is that we could be merely sympathetic towards them, as Charmides is, or on the other hand, merely critical of them, as Critias is. Mere sympathy and mere criticism both orient to a notion of the perfect endowment. Spirit says that the folly of our nature and our upbringing can be befriended and enjoyed - rather than sympathized with or criticised. What is always deeper than the folly of our endowment is our need for a spirited relation to it.

We will develop this by considering spirit's activism with particular reference to the characters of our dialogue. Spirit, we have said, mourns every loss but regrets nothing. By the same token spirit enjoys each of its achievements, but lets go of them when it needs to. Spirit is neither indifferent to the outcomes of practices such that the act in itself becomes everything, nor is it consumed by outcomes in a way that would turn action into a mere means to an end. We want to conclude our essay by formulating this relationship of spirit to motion. We require the motion of spirit to display itself as just and as temperate.

Now justice towards particularity requires being ironic towards one's name. One's name is always particular, issuing a call and providing an inspiration at the same time. Listening to its inspiration is the risk of folly that strongly needs to be taken in order to genuinely undertake the work of answering to its call. The name needs to be generated as something inspirational, friendly, or lovable, as well as

something demanding or testing. This is what Charmides forgets. The name of temperance, which Critias treats as a definition of Charmides (and thus as a sheer demand), Charmides himself wants to treat as a birthright rather than a friend. He is lulled rather than inspired by it, comforted rather than excited. Charmides shelters from the sheer demand of the definition in the refuge of nature: the repressed demand re-surfaces as a headache, because naturalism evades rather than transforms what is external to it.

Charmides is an example of the rejection of enthusiasm evinced by a patriarchal demand. The patriarch treats the Name as if it were external or Other to the offspring who must learn to bear the weight of its demand. In this way the patriarch alienates his offspring, and thus alienates himself from the fertility through which he generated them. The patriarch is interested in the Name more than his own offspring - his offspring are only so many ways of passing down the Name. Offspring are necessary to him, but only in a secondary way - not as good in themselves, but merely as bearers of the Name. The patriarch's impulse to speak thus originates in a pre-possession (his Name) rather than in spirit (irony towards one's name). It is this that renders his speech terminological and definitive. The patriarch imagines that he wills his own name, and wills the endowment of that name upon his offspring (his speeches and actions). Charmides, the "offspring", secretly knows that he is not the product of will: instead he imagines that he is the child of nature. Sweet, thoughtless, purposeless, and all-embracing nature has given birth to Charmides, its child. This alternative is as unironic towards the name as the one on whose rejection it is grounded. It is reverent rather than sanctimonious towards its name. It is natural assurance rather than self-righteousness.

The one who never moves from being an offspring - since nature is a progenitor who ties her offspring to her - never develops an interest in generating offspring of his own.

Where the patriarch is definitive, naturalism is vague. Its vagueness stands, now, for its disinterest in offspring. Where definitiveness depicts a patriarchal relationship to "the Name", vagueness depicts the naturalistic relation. The patriarch alienates his offspring by treating them as secondary to their Name: the naturalist, on the other hand, abandons his offspring to namelessness. His speech is vague. His offspring are nondescript and somehow not of this world: they suffer the strangeness of the foundling. The foundling finds it hard to develop into anything particular if he spends his energy trying to find the original parents he knows he has lost: whereas the legitimate heir (the patriarch's offspring) finds it hard to develop into a lively participant if he spends all his energy trying to evade the nominal parents he is burdened with. Both the foundling and the legitimate heir need to transform their condition by developing the irony of the name.

Critias and Charmides find it hard to befriend because they are more like the repetitive circle of rationalism and vagueness. Critias wants to treat Charmides as the legitimate heir of the reputable Name, the inheritor of the definitions he endows (the temperate one, and so on). Charmides, as becomes apparent during the dialogue, realizes more and more how much he wants to evade this headache by submerging the name in nature - that is, by forgetting the difference a name makes, forgetting how it could actually inspire or move speech. Charmides is in flight from his would-be parent Critias. He will avoid inflicting the Name in turn on his offspring by a simple enough device:

he will abandon them at birth. His horror of patriarchy makes him generate foundlings (vague speeches). When the offspring or speech discovers its own vagueness (its dim origins) it will seek instead for the Name of its source - it will give birth to the desire for the definition. We can imagine Critias now as Charmides' offspring trying to define who Charmides is. Critias hears in Charmides' obscurity an echo of his unknown parent. Critias the foundling is in quest of his mythical parent, "Charmides". The relationship between them presents a spectacle like that of two dogs chasing each other's tails around in a circle. In their tendency to simply make each other react, they push each other further away from the spirit of the mean, the spirit of integrated temperance and justice.

We can ask now: what has his conversation with Socrates shown Critias? One thing it shows him (and this is what is truly conclusive about it) is that try as he might he cannot possess everything. Socrates demonstrates that there is a difference between the "science of sciences" that Critias supposes is temperance, and the science of human advantage (the knowledge of good and evil). The science of sciences, whatever it means, and supposing it to be possible, would produce omniscience: only the knowledge of good and evil will ensure that things are done beneficially or to human advantage. Critias makes one last attempt to incorporate the science of human advantage within (his version of) sophrosyne. He protests:

"Why will not sophrosyne be of advantage?  
For, however much we assume that sophrosyne  
is a science of sciences, and has a sway over  
other sciences, surely she will have this particular  
science of the good under her control,  
and in this way will benefit us?" (174d-e)

Socrates reminds him that just as they had earlier agreed that medicine and not sophrosyne gives health, so the science of good and evil and not

sophrosyne gives advantage. Finally, Socrates concludes with one of the aporiae for which the early dialogues are renowned. He asks,

"How then can sophrosyne be advantageous,  
when it produces no advantage?" "Apparently  
it cannot, Socrates", (175a) Critias replies.

Now we can see the aporia for more than most commentators would have it: it is an invitation to Critias to show temperance. Critias must learn to transform his desire to possess everything into the Desire for what is truly beneficial. He must accept that the "science of sciences", even granting its existence, would not incorporate the science of human advantage. Critias must reflect upon the Desirability of the science of human advantage as against the mere intelligence of the "science of sciences". His unresistant "apparently it cannot, Socrates", is his acceptance of this work. Critias is beginning to learn temperance. He has experienced the Desire to be influenced by his offspring.

Somehow, Charmides also seems to desire an influence. He stays close to Critias instead of merely running away from him. What does this tell us about Charmides' interest in Critias, and how could we transform or develop that interest so as to make the two friends? From Critias, Charmides gets the liveliness or difference of the speaker. Even definitions provide topics or usages for speech. So Charmides shows an incipient, though as yet merely potential, desire for conversation. The problem with the Charmides - Critias relationship is that it short-circuits Charmides' embryonic desire by vicariously satisfying it. The slippery one has little difficulty evading the attempt to be pinned down: somehow he actually lives off this because it invites him to begin a career in evasion. In this sense, the place for the "man without qualities" to be is the bureaucracy, and

indeed, he is , in truth, a product of it. So if the strength of Charmides' desire for Critias is his desire for conversation, the problem is that this strength is obscured by the weakness of taking refuge in abstract definition. Our question is: what would develop the strength of Charmides' desire (for Critias) and enable it to be developed?

Charmides must learn to become conclusive by re-orienting himself towards particularity. The rationalist patriarch and the vague naturalist each have a weak relation to particularity. The patriarch subordinates and subdues it under the aegis of the Name. He knows just how he wants it to be in advance. The unhappiness of the patriarch is the imperfection of the example: the patriarch is always potentially like Henry the Eighth in that he is unwilling to work on any relationship but would sooner kill it and begin again. This reminds us of the way that Critias is always trying to "withdraw his previous admissions" and start over. The patriarch is jealous and judgemental rather than fertile and imaginative towards particularity because he abstracts the example for the sake of the Name it signifies. At the opposite extreme, the vague naturalist, in reaction against the oppressing of the example, eschews interest in particularity altogether. A discourse without examples, he reasons, will not be patriarchal. To be sure: yet it becomes impossible to develop a sense of what the discourse is. Here, in fact, is the way of negativity - in reaction to the weak or abstract grasp of necessity.

Enjoying particularity, then, requires being neither indifferent nor judgemental towards the name, but rather being imaginative or ironic towards it. To develop the good example for something requires re-presenting the one who is a worthy bearer of its name:

one who would enjoy being ironic towards the name it gives him. One who enjoys the spiritedness of being named is the conclusive speaker. Spirit is the progenitor re-collected by the conclusive speaker in his speech. When spirit becomes one's progenitor, this generates the necessity of offspring.

In Chapter Three, we addressed the question of why Socrates turns the conversation away from Charmides and instead addresses himself to Critias. We saw that by doing this Socrates was being just by doing what was best for everybody. Now we can take up this remarkable transition in the dialogue and ask another question of it. For at this point, we notice that a change seems to come over Charmides in the final remarks he makes prior to his quitting the conversation. So we want to ask: what is the nature of Charmides' response at this stage, and what has he yet to learn by listening to Socrates converse with Critias?

The character of Socrates' conversation undergoes decisive transformation at the point where Charmides imports into the discussion Critias' definition of temperance. Up to now, Charmides has merely been showing the difficulty we expect the natural type to find in expressing his opinion. Now almost the first thing Charmides has said to Socrates is that he wishes to "write out the charm from (his) dictation". (156a). This demonstrates the temptation towards passivity of natural harmony or modesty. And Charmides' mere reliance on Critias' ("or some other philosopher's") definition shows that he has succumbed to this temptation. Natural harmony is liable to corrupt the desire for conversation by turning it into a kind of passive acquiescence in "the truth". The truth is treated abstractly, such that it can be transformed into a quietism that harmonizes with nature's endowment.



And note how Critias' definition can be made to do this. Whereas he interprets "doing your own business" in a self-centred and manipulative way, Charmides can equally take it in a quiet and privatized sense. Socrates' remark that whoever framed the definition was obviously speaking in a riddle is addressed to what is happening here. Passive acquiescence in "the truth" necessarily transforms the truth itself into something passive and without vigour. One tendency that is paramount is for it to assume both its own and others' understanding of whatever merely appears to be comprehensive. Just as natural harmony is the appearance of temperance, so it tends to pacify comprehension into an abstract or mystical unity that transcends speech. Natural harmony is attracted to whatever sounds unified and all-embracing and repelled by difference.

This is the assumption that Charmides has been making all along: that both he and Critias have been "doing their own business" in their grasp of the definition. Just at the moment when Critias, as we saw, glimpses the possibility that Charmides has not been doing Critias' business, Charmides, to equally comic effect, begins to see that Critias doesn't even know what his business is. At first, Charmides doesn't get this point: he resists Socrates' identification of the definition with Critias by asking "what matter from whom I heard this?" (161c). In a way, of course, Charmides is right: it doesn't matter who said it, but what does matter is the use he makes of it. More deeply, though, we see here Charmides' universalistic indifference to the example. He is completely oblivious to the kind of relationship he has with Critias, and of the need for the relationship to re-present the "temperance" of the definition.

Socrates wants to educate Charmides by bringing home to him the very real possibility that what sounds comprehensive and wise often means very little. The person who speaks may not actually understand what he is saying: the result will be abstractness. Now to educate Charmides at this point, Socrates needs to provoke him. After he brings out the obscure and riddle-like character of the definition, he starts inciting Charmides. "Was he a fool who told you?" (162b), he asks him. Charmides is experiencing a revelation which is really amazing him, and he shows the mixture of disturbance and vicarious pleasure he feels by speaking in the past tense: "Nay, I certainly thought him a very wise man" (162b, my emphasis). The particularity of his relationship with Critias is permeating every part of Charmides' body and soul. For the first time he is realizing that he has been allowing himself to be duped: and his temptation is to smirk at the faker he now takes Critias to be. The risk of course is that Socrates could become a substitute for Critias, because he is the one who has taken the scales from Charmides' eyes. Charmides still has much to learn from the ensuing conversation, even though he will not contribute to it. Socrates will need to remember this, even though he must surely find it hard to blame Charmides for what he does next. Asked if he can tell Socrates the meaning of the definition, he replies,

"Indeed, I cannot; and I should not wonder  
if the man himself who used this phrase did  
not understand what he meant".

Whereupon, Socrates tells us, "he laughed slyly, and looked at Critias". (162b).

Charmides starts to stir up Critias, telling him he has been refuted. What he has discovered is that he can orient to the effect he has on others: he can provoke a response rather than merely gene-

rate an effect. Charmides is learning that he is capable of being an active participant in the development of the conversation. What he has yet to learn is that he needs to be an active participant.

What Charmides needs is necessary and essential to him, so it must be sought for vigorously by him. At the outset, Charmides thought he needed the charm Socrates could supposedly dictate to him. So he does need it, but in a stronger way than he thought. By listening to Socrates' conversation with Critias, Charmides learns that the charm is not a guarantee but more like Desire. What really charms us is Desire (in ourselves or in another). What is really charming is our grasp of the spirited necessity in our Desire. Our Desire is a Desire for what is necessary to us, yet the necessity is deeper than mere necessity, conditions of survival, or sheer constraint. Our enjoyment (our experience of charm) is our learning that the necessity we Desire is oriented to worth. It is good to desire offspring, because they particularize what is necessary for us.

Socrates, after his supposedly unsuccessful attempt to discover what temperance is in his conversation with Critias, turns again to Charmides, and says he is grieved that the charm has turned out to be so useless. Charmides tells him that, on the contrary, he wishes to be charmed by Socrates daily, since if neither Socrates nor Critias know what temperance is, he certainly does not. Critias encourages him, and they talk privately for a short time, until Socrates asks: "You sirs, what are you conspiring about?" (176c). Again, Socrates is provoking Charmides. Conspiring could resonate with what Critias and Charmides have long been engaged in. Socrates is playfully yet seriously asking them to give an account of their conspiracy and by so doing to turn it into something other than a tyranny. A conspiracy

that gives an account of itself is perhaps, a just conspiracy: the only truly just conspiracy is friendship. That it is Charmides who answers rather than his erstwhile spokesman Critias shows that his natural assurance is being invigorated by the desire to justify. Charmides takes up Socrates provocation and presents a fait accompli: "We are not conspiring, we have conspired already". Finally, when Socrates remarks that, in the mood of violence, he is irresistible, he admonishes: "Do not you resist me, then" (176c).

All of this could sound like incipient tyranny, and indeed this would be one possible reading. However, for us, a stronger reading would begin with Socrates' reply to Charmides' admonition. Socrates says "I shall not resist you, then" (176c). Socrates will not resist Charmides desire, since it is the desire to pursue the conversation: but somebody else might resist. The somebody else in question is the one who all along has been resisting the desire to converse: Charmides himself. For it has been Charmides, with his attachment to nature, who has established his relationship to Critias on the basis of forestalling conversation for the pretence of sophrosyne. So what we are shown in Charmides' remarks is not incipient tyranny, but on the contrary, incipient conversation, incipient justice: the beginnings of spirit. Charmides is beginning to want offspring.

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